

*Historical Aspects
of the
Fine Arts*

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*Rhys Carpenter
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HISTORICAL ASPECTS OF THE FINE ARTS



ADDRESSES BY
RHYS CARPENTER
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EVERETT V. MEEKS

Delivered at the Dedication of a New Wing of
The Allen Memorial Art Building
Oberlin College
Oberlin, Ohio
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FOREWORD

The addresses contained in this volume were delivered at the Symposium in Fine Arts which constituted a part of the exercises held in connection with the dedication of a new wing of the Allen Memorial Art Building at Oberlin College April thirtieth, 1938. This wing was the gift of Mrs. Francis Fleury Prentiss of Cleveland, formerly Mrs. Dudley Peter Allen, who had presented the original building to the college after the death of Dr. Allen in 1916. Since that time the work in Fine Arts had grown to such an extent that the original building, although outstanding among those of its type, was inadequate to house the museum collections, the library, classrooms, and studios of the Department. Recognizing this fact, Mrs. Prentiss with understanding generosity made possible the remodeling of the old building and the erection of this new wing, thereby providing not only adequate studio and classroom space but also an auditorium equipped for lectures and as an experimental studio theater. To her Oberlin owes a lasting debt of appreciation for a gift of such importance to the cultural life of the college and through the college to that of the country at large.

The subject of the Symposium was "The Historical Aspects of the Fine Arts." The speakers were chosen because of their distinction as authorities in their respective fields and Oberlin College is deeply indebted to them for their willingness to take part in this dedication. The audience was composed of persons from all portions of the country interested professionally in the Fine Arts and the present volume is published to make these addresses available not only to those who heard them but to a wider audience.

The arduous work of editing the proof and carrying the book through the press has been done by Mr. John S. Diekhoff of the Department of English, assisted by Miss Cathryn M. Crook, a member of the staff of the Department of Fine Arts.

CLARENCE WARD

Oberlin College
June 1938

This volume was printed for the Department of Fine Arts of Oberlin College at the press of the Oberlin Printing Company, Oberlin, Ohio.

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THE SPIRIT OF CLASSIC ART

Rhys Carpenter

Among the topics set for today's Symposium, Classic Art suffers most acutely from those meritorious defects of character which usually beset the oldest and most respected citizen in any community. Consider for a moment, if you will, how so ancient and honorable a personage is handicapped by his unescapable reputation. He enjoys an irreproachable moral character (which in itself is seldom a very stimulating possession), the honest respect of his fellows, the prestige of having maintained with unalterable firmness the same opinions as long as any one can remember—which in his case amounts to something over two thousand years! In all public meetings the leading citizen of the community will be called on first, expected to speak rather lengthily, yet only to express opinions that everybody knows by heart beforehand. Still, it would never do to pass him over without letting him explain for the hundredth time how much better the world was in his far-distant youth and shake his head sententiously over the deteriorated manners of the present generation. You, the audience in today's gathering, knew only too well that Classic Art was sure to make the opening oration of the Symposium and that the only way to avoid this festival orator would be to stay away from the festival—a drastic step which I am delighted to see that none of you have seen fit to take!

Poor Classic Art! so venerable, so tediously right, with all the dullness of perfection, all the lackluster of undisputed and long-standing success! And yet there are advantages in being old, for a strange power of vision can sometimes come to the aged. Like the drowning man who reviews his whole life in the swift seconds between the last gasp and the final gulp, a man near death can sometimes understand and appraise himself, what he has done and what he has stood for, and guess his final failure or success with an unwonted accuracy. I have been privileged to sit at the bedside of Classic Art during the recent years when he thought that he was dying. I remember in particular a recent occasion when he spoke of himself to me with great frankness and without bitterness. As I listened to him I realized that here was not at all the man I had always imagined, but that, in order to be as

great as we all knew him to have been, he had really been vastly greater. I come to you still fresh from the experience of hearing a remarkable old man defend himself and of seeing his world and ours for a fleeting moment through his steady eyes.

"When I was young," said the Spirit of Classic Art, "I can remember the excitement that we felt in finding solutions to problems which had never before been solved. Of course, once all of us knew the answer to such a problem, the zest was apt to vanish. But at first, while all was still untried, while the possibilities seemed still limitless—you can scarcely guess the mental eagerness of that springtime of the spirit. They tell me that the school-boy nowadays still is taught our ancient Greek geometry. How dull that must be! There in his book are written all the answers, the only possible answers, with all the proofs; and he is driven along a fixed and traveled road like a pack animal headed for market. Up they go over the same bridge, all the asses! But we Greeks *discovered* this geometry. One thing led to another, sometimes more simple, sometimes more intricate, but always to be reasoned out, if only we were clever enough to catch the lurking reason. We used to draw figures in the hard sand of the seashore, paper being still scarce and expensive. Just behind the wet line of the breaking waves we worked our arguments. There was really nothing there—just dark smooth sand and the brilliant blue sea. But out of that nothing we reasoned out a whole world of things. And if the wind blew the sea higher up the shore and washed out all our marks and lines, nothing was lost or destroyed; it all still existed just as we had reasoned it out, in the perfect world of the human brain.

"I understand that there are those among you nowadays who complain that it is very dull to have the three angles inside a triangle, no matter how you draw it, sharp or stumpy, big or little, always adding up to exactly two right angles. But there must also be those in your midst who still can see, as we did, that there is something altogether exquisite in that persistence of the ruling sum total, no matter how desperately you change the shape or size of the triangle. I am told that you have thinkers nowadays who amuse themselves by imagining that the three angles of a triangle do *not* make up two right angles and by considering what sort of

world that would be wherein such things could happen. I cannot remember that we Greeks ever assumed the truth of an untruth except to prove that it was a lie. However, for my part, I would venture the remark that such a world would not be a human world, and that in *our* world there is only one right answer to this peculiar little problem and that, dull though that single solution may be, because it always comes out the same, to us who first discovered the secret it was the very opposite of dull. Can mankind not endure to repeat even the truth? Is perfection tedious just because it will not change? In that case I would suggest that surely there must be more intricate geometric properties for your modern geometers to discover, and in these perhaps you could recapture the excitement of our old Greek days. If so, you would find at the beautiful end of your intricate searching, me, the Classic Spirit.

"In the books which you have shown me," said the Spirit to me (for I often brought him pictures of later things to look at), "I have noticed imitations* of our older marble statues. At first I could not comprehend what was wrong with these, what subtle something was lacking. They seemed sullen, like a wise man who refuses to tell you what he knows, and vapid, like a beautiful woman who will not smile and say 'thank you' when you praise her good looks. At length I came to put my finger on their fault. These statues* were like the schoolboy's geometry, done correctly* but lacking every zest. The intelligence came from elsewhere, from some other brain long dead. It was all about as interesting and stimulating as the three angles inside the triangle, two thousand years after our greatest men first shivered with excitement at finding it out. These and the much later artists who made what they were pleased to call classic Greek statuary,* or introduced their counterparts into their paintings,* seem to me merely to have confessed their own inability to improve on our products, without ever really grasping the feelings and intentions of us who made these marbles and bronzes which they professed to admire so greatly. Although some of our sculptors may have honestly believed* that it was possible to find the one, single, and perfect embodiment of the naked beauty of our race and kind, a sort of unsurpassable formula for pose and proportion and muscular

*Dancer,
Vatican†

*Triton Group,
Vatican

*Rape of Pro-
serpine, Girar-
don

*Paris and
Helen, Louis
David

*Doryphoros

†Marginal notes refer to the illustrations used by the speaker.

articulation, none the less I notice that even these sculptors sought their ideal by improving on their predecessors and not by merely copying and re-copying a purely traditional standard and concept of perfection. Even if we believed that beauty could be reduced to its true forms and hence to formulas, still we never said that such formulas were inert, unchanging abstractions. The formula referred to us, as well as to what we did: as times changed, men changed and fashions shifted,* not whimsically and arbitrarily, but because men's minds had moved; and thus the living formula of beauty evolved and altered.

**Seated Hermes*

**Pauline Bonaparte, Canova*

"When I survey the statuary* and the paintings which your historians of art label, 'In the Classic Tradition,' a trembling seizes me, as though of extreme decrepitude; I feel old and chilly—definitely chilly. As long as we were at the height of our health and strength, it was not our habit to look behind us more admiringly than we looked ahead, nor to imitate and reproduce what we had already accomplished, as though it were unsurpassable, wholly satisfactory, untouchably perfect. When Pheidias cast his bronzes, his master Ageladas was already out of fashion.

**Ares Borghese*

**Marathon Boy*

Agorakritos and Kallimachos* revered their master Pheidias; but well they knew in their hearts that they had left him behind and had moved forward into a world of more wonderful possibilities. Timotheos turned his back on Kallimachos, Praxiteles* on Timotheos, Lysippos on Praxiteles. How then could your own artists imagine that by mere resuscitation of our outworn forms they could arrest the perfect moment, when we ourselves had failed to do so? Where there is no aspiration to throw away the past and all that it stood for, because there is something much, much better still to do, there life languishes and art cannot live.

**Nike, Herculaneum*
**Antinous, Capitoline*

We Greeks had our classicistic phases,* our back-stepping and backward-gazing, our periods of languishment;* but by and large I may say proudly, and with conviction, that our sculpture was never 'classic.' It was progressive, forward-looking, alert, and changeful. It sought perfection ahead of it, not behind. Had our classic world been really the victim of the classic illusion, it would indeed have corresponded to your own poet's fatally false picture of it:

Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,

Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
 She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
 For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

If I may say so symbolically and without ribaldry, our youths always overtook and caught our maidens.

"I can remember seeing the trading vessels come in to the Peiraios after a voyage along barbarian shores—from the head of the Adriatic where the Alpine rafts floated down to the mouth of the great Eridanos, or from Massalia near that other great river, the Rhodanos, or from the Iberian silver coast, or from the top of the Inhospitable Sea, where the Scythian horsemen rode down from the great harsh plains. These ships of ours occasionally brought back* odds and ends of barbarian manufacture. We never really liked these things. Talking them over,* we sometimes had the curiosity to wonder what had been done wrong by the barbarian craftsmen who had made them. The fault was nearly always the same: the artisans never seemed to have paused to ask themselves what the objects were for, what purpose they had been made to serve, or why they made them at all.

**Iberian
figurine
*Bronze jug,
Hallstadt*

"I can rightly claim that in our own utilitarian creations (I am thinking of our pots and jugs and jars, and our furniture, such as chairs, tables, mirrors) we were always somehow aware that the use could and should dictate the form. When our potters made a jug,* they indulged in a kind of visual geometric reasoning, as though saying to themselves, 'This jug must hold its liquid, hence it must have a belly; it must stand upright, hence it must have a foot; it must be raised, hence it must have an arm (though I confess that we sometimes mixed our metaphors and spoke of a pot's ears!), and it must regurgitate, hence it must have a mouth.' They seem to have carried such argumentation into even finer detail, as though reasoning within themselves,* 'If this jug is to hold wine, it must pour delicately and without waste, hence the mouth must possess both throat and lip; and as wine is more costly than water and only a little will be poured at a time, the body must be relatively more capacious and the neck more contracted than in a water jug,' whereas when they made a mixing-bowl* for wine and water together, they made its mouth broad and open for dipping. But the final turn to their activities

**Amphora,
Andokides*

**Oinochoai*

**Krater*

*Red-figure
amphora

was perhaps due rather to instinct than to reason; for having bestowed upon their creation a foot, a belly, neck, throat, mouth, and lip, as though they were gods creating living forms, they arrogated to themselves an almost divine solicitude for this creature of theirs. For, just as they well knew that a man's head cannot be either as large as a giant melon or as small as a wizened apple, but all his parts will grow in such relation of size and shape as the essential living human mechanism requires, so* they sought to impart to foot, belly, neck, and all the other elements of their jugs, such related and responding curves and widths and heights as would draw all the parts together into a single organism, to indue their creature with a proper life of its own. And when they had attended to all these things, they made their jug and rested from their labor.

"And now I shall tell you something which will no doubt perplex you. I had a habit of frequenting the workshops of our potters, so as to be present at the throwing of the pots upon the wheel and to supervise the intricate stacking of the kilns; for I was fascinated by all the knack and skillful ingenuity of craftsmanship. Yet never in all my visits did I hear the potters actually utter aloud the reasoning which I have just attributed to them. Their works conformed to a logic which they themselves never put into words. You see, it was I who did the reasoning and they who made the pots!

"I am told that many of your most recent artists, particularly your painters, are great reasoners. They abound in theories, programs, and manifestoes. They reduce art to words, and having fought their verbal skirmishes, they set up their trophies of victory and invite the world to look at them. Would it be permitted to an old man, now well along in his third millennium, to offer a comment? Artists should reason through their fingers rather than through their lips. I would not restrain them from talking and theorizing, since that is their privilege as human beings; but they will not advance their art one tittle with all their tattle. Art reasons *itself* out, through the artists and their work. You object that there is no such thing as unconscious reasoning or collective intelligence? The whole history of the world will rise up to refute you.

"Do you think that there is no possibility of reasoning except

through words? Have you never had a dog in your house? Our ancient Greek jugs are a triumph of close-knit logic, with premises and conclusions such as not even our Aristotle could have bettered. I give you my word for it: the men who made those jugs were incapable of such subtle and coherent thinking. *I* did the thinking, and I am still alive to prove the truth of my assertion.

"Consider how perfectly our little perfume pots were reasoned into shape. Costly the volatile essence, tiny the quantity to be bought and sold, small and tight in consequence the container. Drop by drop the expenditure, and small the aperture in consequence, lest streams escape where drops would serve. Around the tiny opening, a flat round table to catch and spread the odorous merchandise. No foot to stand on; for a standing jug may always be upset and broken. Like a pet cricket in a cage, it goes everywhere with its master and dangles from his wrist. Yet the whole shape is coherent, with its own proper grace and character—not like those eastern monsters with the head of a cat on the chest of a woman, wire-thin legs of a bird, and for tail a snake. Who invented, contrived, designed the shape of this perfume pot? No one. A breed of potters evolved it through the years.

"All this is no exclusive quality of my ancient and long-extinguished race. I see your own artisans still at it, and your own works thinking themselves toward their perfect forms. But I see it most clearly there where your artists talk the least, where shortest words are wed with longest work.

"I have been looking long and closely at your own marvelous inventions, for which you have indeed very gratifyingly borrowed one of my own old words *μηχανή*, in spite of our own rather conspicuous lack of ingenuity in the making of such machines. They are like living slaves in what they do. They reach out fingers and thread papyrus rolls on which they press the writings of a thousand scribes in the twinkling of an eye, then dry and turn and fold them, and so at last present their proud masters with countless copies of a chronicle of the day's events gathered according to some inexplicable modern sense of fitness and proportion so as to record from all the world precisely that which had best been passed over in silence. I am not certain that I can compliment you on your newspapers; but I give you my wholehearted admiration for the mechanisms by which you produce them. Yet

one thing about them puzzles me greatly. Your printing presses are like living slaves in what they do; yet they do not at all resemble slaves in their appearance. Our pots and jugs looked as their purposes and activities most cogently suggested; whereas your machines almost invariably conceal their personality. Although they move and behave for human uses and in an uncannily human manner, they have no human life or structure whatever. Perhaps that is because you keep them shut up in prisons. However, I perceive with pleasure that when you allow them abroad on your streets you display a more Hellenic sensitiveness to their organic vitality."

The Spirit went on talking in similar vein; but it seemed to me that he was rapidly becoming involved in such whimsical misapprehensions of our modern conditions that his comments were rapidly losing their value for a modern listener. (Foreigners are prone to such aberrations. They tour the United States giving lectures and recitals, and are apparently perfectly at home with all our habits and customs, till all of a sudden one meets them coming to an informal afternoon reception in full evening dress or attending some thoroughly official ceremony in flannels—and on the instant a great gulf has sundered two alien civilizations.) I begged the Spirit to be a little more specific. Quite unfazed, he continued his disquisition.

"Your automobiles—as you barbarously call them, mixing a Greek with a Roman word—your automobiles are most nearly akin to our Greek products, because their parts are shaped to a single and harmonious whole which, like a living organism, moves and runs and freely races. At first you produced, as you yourselves frankly admitted, only a chariot without horses. You senselessly preserved even such details as dashboards, to protect you against the heels of the steeds which were no longer there, and a high driver's seat, as though for cracking an invisible whip over invisible backs. Even the socket to hold the discarded whip was at first built into your cars. Little by little it dawned on your craftsmen that these horse-drawn memories were pointless and hence superfluous. With that unconscious reasoning which belongs to animals and artists, you came slowly to the conclusion that the essential parts of this new creature were four wheels wherewith to run (thus irrevocably classing it among the quadru-

peds), a set of vital organs productive of its power of locomotion, a capacious set of withers whereon to carry its riders, eyes wherewith to see at night, and a voice with which to shout its coming and its impatient orders. So, as in our wine cups and water jugs, the need and use established the parts and their essential shapes. But at first, as barbarians do, you had no sense for the coherence of these parts, no knowledge of the unifying form. More recently your craftsmen have made this final step. Instead of a helter-skelter accumulation of inanimate materials necessary to a self-propelling mechanism, your motorcar of today possesses all the essentials of a lithe and living animal. I do not mean that it drinks in front, has a vent behind, and touches the earth with four hoofs (or rather, shoes), for these are largely accidental similarities to an equine prototype; but I mean that it is a living animal in the sense that it is endowed with vital symmetry and animate coherence, a balanced articulation of its organs in the exercise of their appropriate activities, in short, the same qualities which belong to any successfully living creature, whether horse or wild ass or antelope. Indeed, the illusion that your cars are living animals is easily imparted. From one of your gigantic towers I recently looked down into the deep streets of one of your great cities and saw the human beings like ants and the motorcars like spiders, with equal appearance of intelligent activity, hurrying to and fro. Viewed from so high a vantage point, I must admit that your cars appeared rather like roaches or giant vermin; but when I descended to the street and considered them, I was reminded more of some huge cat or weasel. And this illusion is heightened by the feline ferocity with which they catch and destroy the witless men who, scurrying like mice that cannot reach the wainscot in time, are pounced upon and killed by these cruel beasts of prey which you yourselves have created.

"When, in a lapse of forty years, having at first merely unyoked the horses and removed the singletree and traces from an ordinary carriage, your craftsmen rationally evolved a new vehicle, a new beast with its own appropriate shape and fierceness, they were only applying to your modern conditions the same instinct for artistry with which I actuated my own craftsmen in Athens long ago.

"Certain of your recent writers and critics, who do not seem

to me always to exhibit quite the clarity and vividness of our Plato—a commendable thinker and writer, whose name may perhaps have survived—these writers of yours lay much stress upon the novelty and effectiveness of something which they call streamlining. Of course, the streaming or continuously flowing line was much used and admired at the time of our Great War with Sparta; and we too invented a catchword from the metaphor of a running stream: ‘flow,’ we called it, *ρυθμός*. But thinking that your enthusiasts of today must mean something quite new and different and altogether delightful, since they praised it so inordinately, I determined to look into the matter more closely. At first, I fear that I was somewhat disappointed. I had a disquieting impression as of something specious when I observed a locomotive and train which had been streamlined by painting a large horizontal stripe from one end of it to the other, for I somehow felt that I was intended to believe that it would run faster when thus adorned. And yet, on reflection, I realized that here was something peculiarly Greek. For although your streamlining originated out of mechanical theorizing, it very soon acquired an aesthetic and visual emphasis. The broad horizontal stripe along the train will not help it to cleave the air or move any faster along the rails; and yet it suggests to the eye a greater speed, a more vital coherence in the moving object. And it has a further obvious merit in that it begets the desire to remove protrusive hampering ornament and all irrelevances of outline, in order better to embody the sense of effortless and unhindered forward movement. It is, in fact, the visual forms of Speed which your designers are seeking. Thus they have realized (however inexplicitly) that the Thing-at-rest has one appropriate outline, the Thing-in-motion has another. I can only compliment you on so logical, so truly Hellenic, an argument in Aesthetic Form.

“During the final years of Perikles’s administration, our Athenian sculptors discovered* that they could make figures of men and women in poses betokening rapid motion, but that these would not seem to the eye to be really moving until* they were streamlined with a peculiar swinging curve of drapery. That swinging curve soon became the rage among our artists.* The sculptors applied it to their free figures in the round and to their

**Niobid*,
Copenhagen

**G*, *Parthenon*

**Nereid*,
London

shallow friezes;* the painters could never finish a picture* without somewhere introducing it; it was on our terra-cotta figurines, our decorated vases; everywhere we looked,* the swinging curve whipped us into frenzy. That was after our calamitous Great War. It is at least possible that the new instability and insecurity of life, the sense of far-reaching social changes about us, the dependency, the backwash of despair, had something to do with the fervor and violence of this fashion. In any event, that streamline of ours lasted for more than fifty years. Then suddenly we recovered* and thought no more about it.*

*531, *Bassae*
**Nereid Cup*,
Czartorski

**Maenad*,
Madrid

"On that analogy, your modern malady has still some time to run; and I can easily imagine how its fury may be increased before any sure recovery sets in. For example, you still seem to favor the notion that the streamline should be applied only to moving objects, and that to streamline, let us say, the breakfast table, the midday couch, or the cemetery, would be fundamentally inappropriate. You still streamline the car rather than the garage.

**Venus, Arles*
**Pindar*,
Copenhagen

"And yet, so great may be your love for movement rather than for rest (since you are a people possessed by the desire to be physically active and perennially in motion, wherein you much resemble our Greek heifer-maiden, Io, whom the heavenly gadfly drove frenziedly about the world), you may in time overstep and disregard this barrier. You may streamline your houses, because the resultant suggestion that even they are restlessly on the move may flatter that desire of yours that nothing should be inactive in your presence. And if, by streamlining also your landscape, you can make your restless houses pick up with them their terraces and gardens, their woodsheds and garages, till every wall and bank and grassy contour starts to move, faster and faster, I cannot blame your taste or your aesthetics, whatever I may think about your neurodynamics. For movement is one of the essential marks of life, and the imparting of life to the inanimate is one of the essential marks of art. Why do you suppose that we gave legs and feet to our old Greek furniture, unless it was to suggest that they were alive and had a power of vital movement in their shapely wooden limbs? Why did we impart* a subtle curve to the vertical profile of our temple columns, if it was not to take the stark immobility out of the tautly straight? Why did we turn* our mirror handles into little bronze maidens and god-

**Didymaion*

**Mirror, Berlin*

**Aegina,*
Furtwaengler

desses, if not to vitalize their dead support? Why did we tolerate* struggling marble figures in our temple pediments, if not because we felt that in the great gable space between cornice and roof the soundless emptiness must be shattered by the inrush of the living world of heroic men? Everywhere we strove to bring suggestions of the animate into our unanimated surroundings, until limestone and marble, metal and wood and bone, and even the clinging, earthy mud took shape and helped to people the hilltop* and the town where dwelt the race of Greeks? Why else did we have art at all?

**Reconstructed*
Akropolis

"You are not doing otherwise today when you search for moving outlines and illusionary vitalizing forms for the things which your brains devise and your hands produce. Only when you leave them stark, ungainly, shapeless, without breath or movement, do you sin against my great Hellenic truth.

**Table of*
Orders

"I have heard many of you say that the Greek form of architecture in its three variants* of Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian should still be your pattern today. Herein I must accuse you of hasty and un-Greek judgment. Why should you hold it a merit to copy our columns and entablatures? *We* did not copy the pyramids and closely pillared hallways of Egypt nor the ungainly palaces of Assyria, with all their tyrannous magnificence crowning a huge hill of river mud. What we borrowed from

**Distant View,*
Aegina

**Moldings, Epi-*
dauros

others we transmuted to our special needs.* It is a clever man who can see* in the abstract carven moldings of our temples the water lilies of the Nile or the pine cones of Babylon. Perhaps, were you still religious and had need of marble dwellings fit to house the gold and ivory likeness of a god, you could not do better than to reproduce our ancient temples. But you worship gold and ivory in less symbolic form, and have learned to build shelters not for one Olympian but for a thousand laymen. In your gigantic cities* you shape iron and glass and stone to make habitations in sixty or a hundred tiers of superimposed rooms. Consider how un-Greek it is to set our Greek architectural forms as ornaments on these structures! The columns* which ringed our temples were the sole exterior support between platform and roof; they could stand side by side to help in a common task, but they were not intended to stand on each other's shoulders like

**New York*
Daily News

**Paestum*

acrobats. A Greek building was shaped to a unifying form which held all of it within its power. To set columns on top of columns, as did our Roman and later imitators,* is to destroy the unity out of which the column takes its meaning. This is already evil enough. But to pile fifty tiers of windowed rooms to a vast height and then set what you are pleased to call a classic façade in front of the first three or four of these stories is to cut off a dwarf's body and hang it in front of a giant's shin. It is to proclaim your own structure naked and my ancient buildings puny: I am proved inadequate and you uninventive, to the advancement neither of my reputation nor of yours.

**Vicenza
Valmarana*

"What would I have you do, if you were really anxious to emulate me, the Classic Spirit? Why surely, not blindly to reproduce my outward forms, but to understand my reasoned thinking and apply that to your own new problems. If you have superimposed fifty rooms, for the adequate reason that you with your crowded activities must live vertically instead of horizontally, I bid you consider how you may mold these fifty together to suggest a human building and habitation rather than*—an egg crate. It is possible to give a unifying form to a beehive, no matter how multitudinous the swarm within.

**Model Sky-
scraper*

"I have been reading your modern treatises and noted a great to-do about functional architecture. A modern building is good, these insist, only in so far as it is a visible expression of the mechanics of its construction, though they do not offer any sound reason for this dogma or make the slightest effort to explain what they so heatedly maintain. With much of what they say I cannot but agree. For example, what could be more Greek than to argue that each part of a building should take a shape suggestive of its use and purpose, that construction should fundamentally condition appearances, that all misleading adornment or idle pretentiousness should be eliminated? But I fancy that other great schools of architecture before now have stressed these same principles as the natural basis for architectural design; so that you can scarcely claim novelty or originality for such a formula. What I imagine to have occasioned all this stir about 'functional design,' is the realization that the traditional forms of architecture are no longer in harmony with the altered materials, constructional methods, and commercial uses which your modern age

has produced. You have inherited temples, palaces, baths, and churches; and you desire to build railway stations, apartment houses, office buildings, and factories. You have inherited brick and mortar and cut stone; and you desire to build with steel and glass and concrete and rubber and pressed fiber. Conservative in training, inactive in imagination, slothful in mental habit, your builders have tried to fit the old forms to the new needs. Roman Imperial baths have been adapted* into railway terminals; Periklean temple fronts have masked steel and concrete vaults for banks; columns and moldings have incoherently striven* to decorate alien structures which they could not dominate; Gothic cathedral spires have enshrined the tiered cells of office workers; factories have been arranged to ape royal pleasure courts and palaces. What wonder if at last some sense of the incongruity and futility of such outworn and inappropriate traditions has forced itself upon your architects?

**Pennsylvania
Station, New
York*

**Public Library,
New York*

"If in the end you revolt against my classic tradition, I would not have you do otherwise. It is not Greek to misuse a form even when that form itself is Greek. To borrow the mere language, the casual appearances of my great architecture, and to neglect utterly the spirit which created those appearances, is to make yourself not more but less Hellenic. Where your heritage is alien to your modern activities, you do right to discard that heritage.

**Entablature,
Parthenon*

**Concord,
Akragas*

"But one thing you have neglected or not known. The outworn structural forms of an earlier tradition become naturally the ornamental forms of a new method of construction. The decorative detail* of the Doric Order can by no conceivable hypothesis be explained from the exigencies of trabeated stone construction. If they seem to be vestiges of wooden timberwork or tile, they survived into stone,* not because my architects were too stupid to see that they were outmoded, but because their very familiarity and old-fashionedness gave them a warrant for continuing to exist. When Rome devised the fluid medium of cast rubble concrete, the verticals and horizontals of my Greek column-and-beam method of building ceased to be essential expressions of structural truth. Had the Romans pressed the functional argument and banished my Greek Orders as not merely out-of-date but fallaciously irrelevant, they would have found themselves

with an Imperial city of shapeless façades and incoherent sky lines. But they depressed my Greek Orders* from structural to decorative forms and thereby added a second great period to classical design. This happy fusion of the structural arch and vault with the merely decorative column and beam was to survive and attain* still more harmonious beauty in times that lie but a few hundred years behind you of today. But once again, in your own generation, building materials have undergone a revolutionary change. Steel has replaced timber and vaulting-stone; re-enforced concrete has replaced cast rubble cement. In your cities, economic pressure has even more drastically altered structural form* by piling your buildings vertically on end instead of allowing them to expand along the ground. So obvious is the incongruity between classic tradition and modern construction that you are prepared to break completely with your heritage. Your buildings need no longer pretend to be cast in a traditional form; their own inner newness is to determine their outward appearance. In consequence, you have debarred* yourself from even an ornamental use of the past and have no other resource than mechanical articulation, which you call constructional self-expression, functional design. Where your obligation was merely to change your ornament radically, you have discarded ornament altogether. Where the demand was for a new harmony of form, you have decided to do without the most fundamental elements of style. With the same lack of associative connotation deplored in Wordsworth's famous primrose by the river's brim, a modern bridge is to be only the visible articulation of girders spanning a stream; an office building is merely a vertically nested crate of steel and glass; a railway station* is a glass canopy suspended over parallel alternations of rails and platforms, with such other additional structure as may serve the coming and going of passengers and their belongings; a school, a hospital, a factory are solely and simply what they do, in terms of how they can be built. And you think that is enough for them to be.

"It is not apparent why the correct application of a successful theory of mechanics should be thought to be architecture's sole warrant for continued existence. I notice that when you buy a clock, although you demand that it be correctly constructed, an efficient machine for recording the time of day, yet you apparent-

**Baths of
Caracalla,
Restoration*

**Ragione,
Vicenza*

**View of New
York*

**Philadelphia
Savings Fund*

**Pennsylvania
Station, New
York*

ly exercise preference and choice in picking out a clock for your mantelpiece. In addition to its ability to record time, such a clock must have outline, design, style, texture, color, and a great many more qualities, none of which seem to be structurally functional nor most satisfactorily attained by allowing the springs and cogwheels to express their activities and purposes. To me, a hopeless animist, there is something essentially indecent in a transparent glass clock which shows its inwards to every passer-by.

"Only a few minutes ago I insisted that my own ancient jugs and jars were constructed functionally: to look at them appraisingly was to understand their purposes and performances. And yet their harmony of parts, their rhythm of outline, their—do I dare utter the abhorred word?—their beauty, were something more and something else than their mere fitness to do their appointed work in the world. Again, animals are marvelous mechanisms, better machines than you yourselves can yet make, since (within reasonable limits) they can repair their own accidents and injuries. Being highly efficient machines, living animals are functionally built: from the streamlined greyhound to the pressure-resistant deep-sea denizen, from the wing and tail of the bird to the fin of the fish, the leg of the gazelle, the tractor mechanism of the snake, they are brilliantly constructed; yet we have the testimony of all the world's poets and artists that something more than the mere outward expression of an inner mechanical efficiency has left its mark on beast, bird, and fish.

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forest of the night,

sang one of your poets, whom I, an ancient Greek, have no difficulty in understanding,

What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer? What the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?

The case against functional architecture has never been stated more dramatically than that! There is a coherence of style in the architecture of the tiger; in every part there is a reference to the living beast who is more than the mere sum of his mechanical joints and sinews. If he is functionally decorated, by being camouflaged for the jungle, yet there is pattern and something more than pattern in his tremendous markings. If you could touch him, you would find his texture superlative. At rest, he is graceful; in motion, he is magnificent. In all he does, he is himself, he is the Tiger.

"I have suggested that your motorcars have achieved something of this unified individuality which belongs to living animals. They have not achieved it merely by being efficient engines or by flaunting their mechanical construction. Your buildings have not yet achieved this coherence, mainly, I think, because their builders have made no serious attempt in that direction. Take so simple a matter as the position of the windows in a great office building. As their function and construction are uniform from floor to floor, functional design leads to nothing but monotonous and lifeless reiteration of a very dull pattern. Each unit is a subdivided steel sash, paned with transparent glass and functionally endowed with a rhythmic spacing about as exciting as the ticking of a metronome. Yet each window is capable of being drawn into a group, attracted or separated, emphasized or slurred, made to protrude or recede; in fact, every window is related to every other window, and all the windows in their mutual relations are an individualizing element of capital importance to the patterned life of their building. Until recently, every architect's vocabulary contained the terms *good* and *bad fenestration*: now that you have functional architecture, there can be no more fenestration, only windows. You are wrong in making such a distinction.

"Just as mere functional construction does not produce a fine clock, but only a satisfactory timepiece, so it cannot expect to produce a fine building, but merely a usable one. What your builders really mean with all their talk of functional architecture is something quite different and thoroughly simple. They have become vaguely and yet acutely aware that the traditional forms which they have inherited from the last two thousand five hundred years are no longer structurally exact nor yet ornamentally

appropriate. I pointed out to you a little while ago that when Rome changed the mechanics of building, it diverted my Greek forms to decorative uses. The Italian Renaissance brilliantly continued the tradition, so inextricably combining Greek structural appearance with Roman decorative application as to disarm the functional attack. Modern engineers have again changed the mechanics; but this time, by substituting the intensely strong and rigid, yet paradoxically flexible, medium of steel, they have created a lithe metal skeleton where we heaped up a quarried mountainside of stone, and thereby have made all our Greek forms seem clumsy and uncouth. Marble columns could continue the apparent effects of wooden tree trunks or decorate the still heavier piers of concrete vaults; but they cannot visually embody the mechanics of steel. The trabeated architecture of the Greek Orders coarsens and falsifies the nervous energy of your modern buildings. To apply it as an ornament destroys—just because the Greek Orders are themselves so functional—the possibility of structural articulation in steel. And therefore your latest builders have rightly revolted against it. If they would be truly Greek in spirit, they must cease to be merely imitatively and outwardly Greek in form. But in that case they must make as great an artistic effort as we did in the olden days. Our temples had style because they had conscious unity, with every part contributing its share, because the coherence of their design was based on proportionate scale, relevant outline, harmonious surface, balanced fall of light and shadow—in short, because they wedded to the structural expression of their mechanics the human forms of visual beauty.

“If your builders really wish to revive me, the Classic Spirit, let them discard their slothful misuse of the Graeco-Roman heritage as completely as my builders discarded the alluring heritage of Egypt and Assyria; let them seize on the essential forms of steel and glass and tile and rubber and fiber as unerringly as my builders exploited the glittering brilliance of painted marble, and out of these new marvelous materials let them shape coherently, harmoniously, intelligently, imaginatively. It is time that such catchwords as ‘functional ornament,’ ‘structural contour,’ ‘dominance of the material medium,’ were discarded. A building need no more be *merely* steel and glass than a clock need be *merely* springs and wheels. In eliminating the classical repertoire, your

builders will have performed the negative portion of their task: the greater and more difficult positive portion of creating the new to replace the discarded old—this still awaits them. May I venture to tell them that in this creation of the animate and organically coherent forms of a new structural style I am still their best guide, their most helpful friend?"

There the Spirit paused, and for a long time neither of us spoke. He had said his say, seemingly; and I had no objections to raise, having caught the force of his argument and been convinced of its rightness. But as I thought over his discourse, it occurred to me that he had confined his pleading to purely utilitarian productions and had left some of the foremost arts entirely out of his discussion. I had always imagined that the statues of ancient Greece were its most signal artistic achievement. Yet after a brief reference he had ignored them as completely as though they had never existed nor won for his little land an undying fame.

I tried to draw him out.

"At any rate," I ventured, rather at haphazard, "the sculpture of the world will forever acknowledge the supremacy of the ancient Greeks."

"On that I have no opinion," he replied; "but I have already remarked that your artists of the modern world who have striven to carve classically beautiful Greek statues, who have painted not living flesh and blood and the burning world of light, but an even-tempered, luminous, and gracious land of classic beauty, paid us a great compliment, but scarcely understood the true temper of our art. We ourselves had to reconcile us to the transiency of all ideal perfection. Even we, the creating Greeks, could not hold the perfect moment for more than a single man's lifetime.

"Consider the greatness of our drama. Aischylos was the first to grip our hearts with the spell of tragedy more intense than our own lives showed us. Sophokles changed the manner of illusion, but still held us spellbound. Euripides altered still more, but held us spellbound. Then, within a single year, Euripides and Sophokles died, and no one ever after brought a great tragedy to the dancing floor of Dionysos. At the time, we supposed that an accident had given us three supremely great dramatists in a

single century, and some other accident had withheld such men from us before and afterward. But you tell me that the same fatality befell you also. Men whose names sound strange in my Hellenic ears, Marlowe, Beaumont and Fletcher, and one whom you seem specially to prize, who (to judge from his name) must have been a Thracian from the region of Mt. Pangaios—Sakosperos my countrymen would have called him—these and many more who composed tragedy all lived within a century; and when they died, tragedy died with them. Did you think that it was an accident that there was no tragedy in England after Sakosperos, or do you know that all imitative art moves toward realism and that certain forms of expression can be successful only if the phase of realism is not too advanced? The Comedy of Contemporary Manners must replace the Romantic Comedy as the realistic insistence of the medium increases. The final refuge of the poet must be the colloquial vernacular so exquisitely chosen that it will seem to suggest all manner of wonderful things, yet actually will not offend the most scrupulously sloven exponent of contemporary speech. So Maeterlinck hid his love of an unworldly beauty under an apparent commonplace of casual conversation which he strove to charge with hidden significance. So, at his best, did d'Annunzio. And William Butler Yeats has sought all his life for the ordinary word surcharged with a surreptitious Celtic wistfulness of beauty."

I confess that I was a trifle staggered at this glimpse into the range of vocabulary and extent of literary knowledge of my friend, the Classic Spirit. But when I ventured to comment on his unexpected erudition, he looked genuinely amazed.

"But . . . but," he said, "I held the pen for these people; they frequently turned to me for help and advice. How can I fail to be familiar with their work?"

"Really," I exclaimed, "this is utterly topsy-turvy! You fraternize with Maeterlinck, d'Annunzio, and Yeats, and apparently you are ready to disclaim Daniel Chester French . . ."

"But indeed!" he interjected.

"Please let me finish," I begged. "You disown Daniel Chester French . . ."

"Quite!" he said.

"Please! please! . . . Alma-Tadema . . ."

"Oh, most certainly!"

"Ingres, Louis David, among the painters; Flaxman, among the illustrators; Thorwaldsen, Canova, among the sculptors. This is apostasy on your part!"

"On the contrary!" he rejoined, "These classicists whom you have just mentioned were, in the last analysis, affected and dissembling craftsmen who contented themselves with a facile but wholly superficial resemblance to the art of classical antiquity. If I may draw a parallel from a neighboring modern land, they resemble the youths who reach a certain university and there acquire an outward manner and a type of utterance known officially as the Oxford accent, yet miss that inward illumination which the university blazon claims to be its enduring verity."

I do not know why I was so taken aback at this familiarity of the Classic Spirit with a seat of learning where he had at least every pretext for feeling at home. But I ignored his quip, not wishing to precipitate more than I could hope to absorb.

I attempted a severer tone.

"In renouncing classicist art," I said, "you are discrediting a great movement, a factor of imponderable importance in the spiritual education of modern Europe. You will have to denounce Winckelmann and Lessing as ignorant and mistaken; you will slur the classic inspiration of Goethe and Schiller; you will be refusing approval to nearly a hundred years of magnificent academic tradition in France, England, and Italy."

"I have only very slight acquaintance with most of these gentlemen," the Spirit began; but I interrupted him, for I wished to press my case.

"Your taste and your comprehension are narrower by just that much," I rejoined somewhat heatedly. "To you, I dare say, the universally admired Apollo Belvedere would seem only a stultifying copy of a second-rate original!"

(I thought that this taunt would reach him; but he ignored it utterly.)

"You disown Alma-Tadema . . .

("Oh, most certainly!" he muttered.)

"You fail to respond to Daniel Chester French . . ."

"My friend," he said, "even a spirit must live. In spite of my already enormous span of years, I am no more eager to die than you are. Through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

I kept myself alive (though, as I told you, I never felt really robust and vigorous) by appealing to the only sympathy which I could expect from a civilization which had reached the baroque (or dramatic-realist) stage in its development. Your present culture is safely out of that phase. It is threatened, however, with all the well-known ailments incident to the disintegration of imitative realism. Your people have lost the placidity and contentment which result from the routine of accepted tradition. Desiring change, but being at a loss for the specific direction in which they should seek it, they are prone to believe that any change must be an advance, and thus have become avid of mere novelty. Style and fashion have thus become an index of date, not of taste, and are tyrannous to such a degree that few of your people can resist a contemporary change of style even when they have not the slightest personal liking for it. As anything behind the date is automatically out of fashion and hence out of favor, and hence worthless, your people have fallen into the habit of destroying things not because they are no longer serviceable, but because they are no longer contemporary. They have thus become inured to waste and thereby insensitive to enduring values. Since human beings invariably adapt their philosophy to their behavior, your people have even gone so far as to rewrite the laws of economics and to claim that prosperity is directly dependent on speed of consumption. As the easiest way to increase consumption is to throw everything away as soon as it is made, you have been given official encouragement in your own wantonness and stimulated to live still more changeably and irresponsibly, forgetting, apparently, that a top will spin only if it is perfectly poised."

"An excellent sermon," I commented, without intending sarcasm, "but more politically tendentious than relevant to the subject under discussion."

"On the contrary," replied the Spirit, "it is just here that I and my influence are most critically involved. Even my continued existence on earth is here at stake. Precisely as the top will not spin unless it has a fixed axis of equilibrium, so this whirl of modern changefulness will merely plunge and flounder and ultimately collapse in exhaustion of all resources—material, spiritual, and neural—unless you agree to recognize some sort of principles which will put Taste in control of sensation, Intelligence

in control of mechanical ingenuity, and Significance in control of variety. For all this I may not be the only duly licensed and qualified guide in all the world of men; but at least I have a formula."

"But that," I said a little bitterly, "is precisely what I have been trying to elicit from you during the whole of this tedious hour. What *is* your formula?"

"Do not be disappointed," replied the Spirit of Classic Art, "if I insist that mine is a pattern for living only in so far as it is a formula for art, but remember that anyone who has a sound formula for art already possesses a fair pattern for living. But let that broader usefulness take care of itself. I am the Spirit of Classic Art, and art is all whereof I have been asked to speak."

"Your formula?" I repeated.

"You should yourself have intelligence enough to compile it from our discussion," he replied. "I am tired now and must ask you to leave me. I will say only this in conclusion:

"Because you have succeeded in bestowing upon your motor-cars (no matter how ugly they may seem to my old and rather weary eyes) the animate individuality of a new race of living creatures, I feel hopeful of your powers of coping with the destructively inert masses of metal and other inanimate materials out of which you persist in creating an ever mightier and mightier race of slaves—slaves that still seem docile, but may before long become rebellious against your authority. Even now some of your economists are proclaiming that you have begun to join battle with your own machines, to determine whether you or they shall be the future masters of your civilization. Art, being more directly a thing of the spirit, always moves at least a generation ahead of economics and social movements, which are retarded by their material context. Hence it is not to be wondered at if in your art this same struggle has long been going on. Will your materialistic machinery and your utilitarian engineering outmatch your powers of artistic co-ordination and creation, until your spirits surrender to inhuman forms and ghastly shapes? Or will your powers of imaginative control dominate these soulless forces? Will you be artists in a wonder-world of your own creations, or mere mechanized economic units, helpless against the

demons which you yourselves have released? Can you sufficiently humanize a mechanized world? I am here to help you try.

“But do not think that there is any hope or salvation in merely aping me. New needs, new devices, new materials—a new civilization in the making. How could mere reproduction and repetition of my Greek solutions for utterly different problems be of any avail? But the Greek attempt was guided by reason, by intelligent insight, by thoughtfulness, by sensitive feelings and skillful hands. That is why, when you have dedicated a magnificent new building to the study and practice of art, it is still worth your while to come back, again and again, to watch what I did in Greece two thousand five hundred years ago. Do not mistakenly imagine that you can attain your end by slavishly copying me. Do not be content to reproduce my outward forms, but penetrate to me, the Spirit which informed the work. I ask you only to try to meet your problems as intelligently as I did, once, long ago—and may you succeed as well!”

That is all the Spirit had to say.

THE MIDDLE AGES

C. R. Morey

The position of this address between the discourses on classical antiquity and the Renaissance is one familiar to the mediaevalist, as is also the feeling it engenders of unprotected flanks. It is no novelty to him to find his frontiers invaded by the classicist and by the protagonist of the modern period, and to see his cherished possessions appropriated by both. What he thinks is most beautifully mediaeval is wont to be termed an antique survival by the one, or a phenomenon of the Early Renaissance by the other.

Yet as far as the arts are concerned, and with a wary eye on one's ancient and modern colleagues, a good case for mediaeval originality and useful invention can be made out for a number of things. We certainly owe to the Middle Ages the first development of the illustrated book. The practice of getting out an illustrated text arose at the very beginning of the mediaeval period, in the fifth century, the date of the famous illustrated Vergil in the Vatican Library which is our earliest existing bound book with pictures. The same epoch produced the edition of the plays of Terence whose miniatures were copied throughout the mediaeval centuries, and probably also the first illustrated Latin psalter, as well as several other texts which at this time received their earliest illustration. Another art that was born with the Middle Ages is the making of stained glass windows; this is so mediaeval that it may be said to have also died with the Middle Ages, at least as far as its creative vigor was concerned. It was the Carolingian School of Tours that taught Europe to write a legible script after antiquity's penmanship had degenerated into mere hen-tracks, and the Carolingian cursive writing, revived in the Renaissance, is the archetype of our present script and of our printed types. The modern drama has its roots in the Middle Ages, music owes to the Middle Ages its polyphonic style, and the mediaeval troubadours discovered for poetry some of its most moving forms.

There are, however, other contributions which were made by the Middle Ages, less obvious in origin, but far more permanent and significant. They are elements of experience which were not realized in antiquity, and since art is in the last analysis only the

reflection of experience, we do not find any convincing expression of them in Greek and Roman art. They seem to me to be:

1. The recognition of transcendental values.
2. The establishment of emotion as a valid element of content.
3. The introduction of the realistic point of view.

To be convincing as to the first of these propositions it is hardly necessary to do more than recall the elementary fact that the dominant force in mediaeval culture was the Christian religion. It was the Christian mode of thought that undermined the materialism of classical antiquity. But the triumph of Christianity was also the triumph of the East. For centuries before Jesus preached in Palestine the Greek confidence in man's ability to control his own surroundings and to achieve a happy life through a moral code of his own making was gradually dwindling, and men of the later Hellenistic age were seeking salvation from a world with which they felt no longer able to cope, and from themselves, in the revealed religions of the East. The advent, spread, and final triumph of Christianity is in fact but one of many symptoms of that steady shift of Mediterranean civilization, from the second century on, toward a more eastern center of gravity, and toward the transcendental mode of Oriental thought, conceiving reality in spiritual terms, and seeking it by supernatural means. Some of these symptoms are political, such as the change of the capital to Constantinople, others economic, such as the abandonment of Rome's port of Ostia in the fifth century. Others reveal the total collapse of the classic conception of the world, as when the theological school of Antioch in Syria, in the fourth century, canceled the whole achievement of Alexandrian astronomy by deducing from Scripture that the earth was no longer round but flat.

In art, material reality is guaranteed by the third dimension, either rendered or suggested. As material reality fades from Mediterranean concepts, volume, mass, solidity disappear from art. Compare the procession seen in the reliefs of the Altar of Peace in Rome, carved at the beginning of our era, with the processions of Christian saints that move along the walls of the nave of S. Apollinare Nuovo in the sixth century. In the Roman work the forms have weight, the poses are varied and natural,

spatial relation remains. In the Christian mosaic the figures are flat, and move in a two-dimensional world so unreal that they have in it no individual existence, but repeat one another in a formula which reveals no idea of material reality, but very forcibly conveys the reality of a transcendental idea. Even within Christian art itself we see the Oriental heaven working: the Ascension of Christ, on an ivory of the early fifth century, still obeys the laws of physics in that Christ is pulled up to heaven by the Hand of God. But when the East had visualized the scene and handed it on to Byzantine iconography, Christ rises supernaturally in a glory supported by angels.

Such transcendentalizing gave rise ultimately to a change of composition. The infinite, sublime, and supernatural are not completely apprehended by the reason; conceived by the mind they become propositions in mathematics, or dogmas. They defy direct expression in language as well; we tend toward metaphor and simile when reacting to spiritual stimuli. The content of these concepts is emotionalized before it is integrated into experience, and ideal expressions of such content in art must needs adopt an emotional mode.

The vehicles in art that are proper to emotion are color and movement, and composition is affected principally by the second of these two. There is nothing that shows how unsentimental Greek art is, so much as its habit of composition. This is always stable, grouping its accents symmetrically about a central axis. The subject may be itself one of violent movement, or may have no obvious central *motif*, but the net result of the arrangement is equilibrium and static solution.

The rational stability of classic composition was gradually destroyed in mediaeval art. Spiritual concepts take form in feeling, and feeling issues in movement. Mediaeval composition reveals two very different modes of movement which are quite as eloquent of the contrasting natures of Eastern and Western Christianity as are the Greek Orthodox and the Latin churches. In one mode the movement is in the eye of the observer as it travels over a pattern, with a quieting and negative effect as a result; in the other, movement is communicated directly, by reason of an illusion of organic life, and results in positive stimulation. An example in ornament might be a Gothic initial, eccentric in de-

sign, and unexpected in direction, after the manner of a living organism. The negative type of composition is rhythmic, the other may be called dynamic. The first was eminently suitable to the Christian art of East Mediterranean peoples, whose religious attitude has ever been a passive one, well expressed in the Hebrew ideal of "fear" of God, and in the very name of Mohammedanism—Islam, "submission." A sense of infinite extent of time, so completely absent from classic works, and so effective in the figuring of transcendental concepts (such as the nature of God), is expressed in Eastern ornament by allover patterns of indefinite repetition. We see this sort of thing in the façade of an Arab castle on the border of the desert in Transjordania—the façade of Mschatta now in a museum in Berlin. Here is the very opposite of classic composition: a zigzag with no visible beginning or end, dotted with complementary rosettes, and filled with tracery so fine and intricate that its effect is ultimately the rhythmic alternation of light and dark which pleases us in lace. This change in composition goes along with the disappearance of the third dimension that we noted before with reference to the saintly procession of S. Apollinare Nuovo. A Roman capital of the second century shows acanthus leaves that still have the form and droop of leaves in nature, but in a capital of the sixth century the leaves are lost in a lovely flat pattern of recurrent lights and darks. The saints of S. Apollinare Nuovo have themselves succumbed to Eastern rhythmic composition: the movement of the procession is not furnished by these figures, who are altogether too flat and unearthly to move at all, but by the eye of the observer as it is carried forward in a steady recurrence of equivalent accents at regular intervals. The unity which gives beauty to this composition is the same rhythmic repeat that makes music of the beat of a drum.

The saints of S. Apollinare in Ravenna are very good examples of East Christian style in the sixth century and of the denaturalizing effect of transcendental content on form and composition. Their existence in Ravenna is proof also of the extent to which this Oriental style had spread westward, and of the inroads it had made on Latin art. The classic strain in the art of the Greek East, to judge by such examples, was on the verge of disappearing in the sixth century. It was saved from total annihilation, paradoxically, by the very calamity that annihilated Greek civilization in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Arab conquest.

The rapid expansion of Islam lopped off from the Eastern Empire those foci of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt which had been most potent in the Orientalizing of East Christian culture. East Christian art was left in greater dependence on its Hellenistic tradition. The eastern orientation did not wholly disappear; we see it in powerful action as the motive behind the Iconoclastic Movement, which was hardly less Oriental in its hatred of image worship than Judaism or Islam. But the creative centers of Byzantine art after the curtailing of the Empire wrought by the Arabs, were Hellenic—Constantinople, Greece, the islands, and the west coast of Asia Minor; and after the great controversy ceased in the middle of the ninth century, the curtain rises again on the East Christian scene to discover an art that was far more Greek than that of two centuries before. The human form has regained its poise and dignity, gesture and movement have won back some equilibrium and grace, draperies fall and fold in rational arrangement.

There is even an outward conformity in the Byzantine style which is integrated in the tenth century to the Hellenistic axial composition. But all these recovered Hellenisms now clothe a content wholly distinct from antique humanism; the physical forms and action which the Greeks found sufficiently perfect in themselves are now impressive for their transcendental content. What Greek would have represented his god riding sidesaddle on a donkey? But where shall we find a more powerful symbol of an event's significance in the realm of spiritual reality than the Byzantine renderings of Christ's Entry into Jerusalem? The very impossibilities of the episode, the indication by light color of the Saviour's path, the animal's feet that do not even touch the ground, the outward unseeing gaze of the figures, unconscious of one another and absorbed in the mystery of the event—these are the means whereby Christian dogma becomes Byzantine art.

It is interesting to note that the impression left upon the observer by this mosaic of Palermo is one of movement, though the only moving figures in the scene (the donkey and the children strewing branches) contribute almost nothing to this effect. The movement is still the Oriental rhythm, more subtly engendered, but nevertheless effective, by virtue of successive accents emphasized in a shifting gamut of color that is largely independent of

form, and the psychological isolation of the actors in the episode, whereby they become somewhat like spots in a pattern. The rhythmic concept of composition emerges more clearly in ensembles such as the mosaic decoration on the apse of Monreale. In this interior the mosaics are omnipresent on the walls; classic prejudice, which would have introduced moldings to separate the decorated areas, is overridden in a general masking of structure by the pervasive tapestry of glass and stone. Around the semi-circle of the apse, the angels, the Madonna, and the apostles are vertically spaced, to conform to decorative demands, and flatly frontal, with no individual movement that might interrupt the curving continuity of the surface.

In the Crucifixion of Daphni the obvious Hellenism of the composition is apparent in the central white body of the Crucified and the simple symmetry of the two figures of Mary and John. Yet the unity and beauty of the mosaic reside rather in the rhythm of accents in line and color; there is no weight to give stability; mass is reduced in the bodies until they suggest an incorporeality; there is nothing to anchor the gaze, which moves quietly and with infinite satisfaction from one linear accent to another, and through a scale of gold, green, violet, and blue to the significant central whiteness of the figure on the Cross. The keynote of the composition is given by the wholly unreal and highly decorative curve of the blood that spouts from the Saviour's side.

It is the shift from fluent rhythm to staccato accents, the change of shaded tones of color to sharp contrasts, the stylizing of line into geometry, that occasionally offend us in the thirteenth century mosaics of San Marco in Venice. In such provincial aspects of Byzantine style we can see how superficial was the Byzantine use of the Hellenistic formulas of naturalism. They were inherited as formulas, and formulas they remain, so much so that when in the fourteenth century an attempt was made to infuse into them something of the old Hellenistic content of naturalism, they are found to be too dry and stiff to stand the strain. The lively movement, for example, of the mosaics of Kahrie-Djami looks like the galvanizing of puppets by an electrical current.

In none of the arts did transcendental content bring about so fundamental a change as in architecture. In none is the appeal to the mind on the one hand, and to our feelings on the other, so

clearly differentiated. The solids of a building are rational creations readily measured by the eye and recorded by the mind. The space enclosed has suggestive value, stimulative of emotion. It follows that as the transcendental entered more and more into Mediterranean thought, the factor of space grew more and more important in architectural composition. The Pantheon at Rome may be called the first important structure in antiquity that was composed as an interior. Here the architect builds with space, though not with space alone, being still antique enough to give full value to the columns and entablatures of his niches, and the coffering of his dome. Hellenistic too is his conception of space as something to be kept within a geometric and commensurable form, in this case a hemisphere. The net effect of the Pantheon's interior is thus still the classic equilibrium.

The next phase in the history of space composition is the inevitable shift toward Oriental rhythm. In the great baths built at Rome and elsewhere in the Empire during the third and fourth centuries, the single dome becomes a succession of domical vaults whose serial effect may be gauged by anyone who enters the concourse of the Pennsylvania Station in New York, modeled after the great tepidarium of the Baths of Caracalla. The process of subdividing the space and giving it rhythmic as well as static unity culminates finally in Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, where the high central dome descends into semidomes that rest in turn upon other smaller ones, so that, standing at one end or the other of the central horizontal axis, the observer can traverse with his eye the mounting grandeur of this matchless interior. The opening up of the space enclosed to the endless space of out-of-doors has not yet occurred to these architects. Windows are spotted along the side walls like high lights in a rhythmic pattern; around the base of the dome they form the corona of a huge chandelier.

Hagia Sophia is the greatest achievement of East Christian architecture. But it owes its greatness as much to what there is still of the classic in its conception as to the mediaeval Oriental factor of space. The space here, however subdivided, is still commensurable and geometric; soaring and breath-taking as it may be, its forms can still be defined. And however much the later Byzantine architects ran true to Oriental form in multiply-

ing their domes and otherwise increasing the rhythmic rather than the static effect of their interiors, the dome remained to give an ultimate definition and limitation to the space enclosed, in conformity with its classic ancestry and with the Aristotelian maxim, "The limited we equate with good; the unlimited with evil."

The implications of interior space which Byzantine architecture was too Greek to pursue were realized in the Latin West. Here we find the other mode of emotional expression, the positive means of composition which we have called dynamic. The suggestion of it is inherent in the earliest Christian interior of the West, the basilical nave in which an axial movement is generated by the rapid succession of the columnar accents of the nave arcade, but is not at all solved by the abrupt termination of this movement in the apse. The space enclosed is uncomposed, escaping as it were through the windows of the clerestory. But if it has no clear direction or proper solution, it has movement nevertheless, and the vitality which this connotes. However this space be ultimately organized, the effect will have to be one not of equilibrium, but of space in motion, and dynamic.

One must follow the intricate history of the Romanesque architecture of the West to see how this unsatisfactory interior was molded to the needs of Latin Christian feeling. The wooden ceiling was changed to a masonry vault with consequently heavy walls and piers. The horizontal axis of the basilica was gradually supplanted by the vertical attraction of the transverse arches of the nave. The church grew darker as the windows diminished in size when vaulting problems made the voids more dangerous; the larger bays retarded the psychological approach to the sanctuary. And when, with the invention of the ribbed vault, the clerestory wall was freed again for lighting, the "dim religious light" of these Romanesque interiors was still retained by colored glass.

The Gothic window is a poetic transcription into color of the transcendental content unconsciously realized by the mediaeval artist in Gothic space. The interior of a Gothic cathedral is the finest illustration of the western dynamic composition as applied to space. Here are no geometric volumes as in Hagia Sophia, but voids of indeterminate shape and restless extension, soaring into the shadows of the ceiling, and merging through the open walls

into infinite space without, whose light becomes the Light Divine through the lovely metaphor of the windows.

Gothic space is infinite space, the synonym of God. But Gothic art does not express this infinite extent by measured rhythm as did the East. The western soul aspires rather with passionate volition to union with the Deity and seeks in design the solution of form in the infinite space around it. Gothic architecture cannot tolerate straight line, but breaks it up into crockets; it terminates the silhouettes of structures not with domes but with sharply pointed spires; the ornament of Gothic manuscripts is thorny with the same sharp solutions of outline that make the characteristic silhouette of Gothic black-letter script.

This positive attitude toward the infinite connotes a realistic point of view. One may contemplate the unending extent of time or space or experience with intellectual detachment, and be satisfied, as was the Byzantine world, with a concept of the infinite expressed by measured rhythm. But the Teutonic genius that drove western mediaeval art to its goal in Gothic was ever endeavoring to *experience* the infinite, which one cannot do without assuming a specific position in the endless sequences. The infinite, in such a conception of experience, invariably connotes the specific, and vice versa.

Gothic architecture is in this sense realistic architecture. The outweighing of the rational factor by the emotional in Romanesque and Gothic alike is due to the ecstatic striving of the religious soul to *feel* its transcendental concepts as well as to consider them. The western attitude is admirably and amusingly illustrated by the earliest true expression of it that we have, in the illustrations of the Utrecht Psalter. And here we need not only think of the extraordinary literalness with which the artist embodies the Psalmist's phrases, such as "Awake, why sleepest Thou, O Lord," which is pictured by the Lord in bed while angels vainly seek to arouse Him. Let us look rather at the symbolic rendering of the Deity, seated on a globe within an elliptical glory. The globe as the Seat of God was a feature peculiar to the art of the West in Early Christian times, whereas the East gave Him a veritable throne, and surrounded throne and God with the elliptical aureole. But as Latin art developed in the Carolingian period with Eastern borrowings, the artists combined the two traditions, as

we may see in the drawings of the Utrecht Psalter. This is a thoroughly symbolic type, transcending any reality. And yet, as soon as the text gives a signal for specific action, the realism of the artist responds at once. In Psalm XII we have the verse, *Nunc exurgam, dicit Dominus*, "Now will I arise, saith the Lord," and the Lord in this case forsakes His symbolic globe and glory, arises indeed, and goes forth to set the psalmist "in safety from him that puffeth at him."

The realistic point of view composes human action and episode according to dramatic, not decorative, value. A scene has unity and beauty only if it convinces as real. Thus in the Utrecht Psalter the story of David's adultery with Bathsheba, the parable of the theft of the ewe lamb from the pauper, and Nathan's denunciation, "Thou art the man," have none of the ordered rhythm of a Byzantine sacred scene, nor the stability of the axial compositions of classic art, but carry their own realistic conviction nevertheless. What is mediaeval about this masterpiece of Carolingian drawing is the *sincerity* of the emotion with which the content is charged; not only are the figures twisted into violently impossible movement, but the landscape heaves and rolls in sympathetic unison. For the first time, perhaps, in the history of European art, the emotion which the artist portrays is his own.

One last comparison will suffice to show how far artistic expression had traveled the road of realism by the end of the Middle Ages. One example we take from the very end of antiquity in the fifth century, the other from the fifteenth. They are both illustrations of Vergil's description of the feast with which Dido entertained Aeneas and Achates, one in the famous Codex Romanus of the Vatican Library, the other the less known illustrated Vergil in the Laurentiana at Florence. The fifth-century miniature is singularly illustrative of antique style, for the simple reason that the style is here falling to pieces, with a consequent revelation of its structure. Everything is quite correctly antique: the nimbi given the distinguished characters is good Hellenistic usage; the tripod table has its legs interrupted by a semicircular bow which is quite in the tradition of classic table legs; the guests recline in proper fashion around a semicircular bolster. But the subtleties of classic composition have flown, and there remain only its essential symmetry and stability, baldly expressed in terms so

monosyllabic that Wickhoff once thought this picture and the others in the book were made up to amuse a schoolboy.

Look now upon the scene as Florence of the quattrocento saw it. We move into a Florentine banquet hall, with pots and vases and hangings and costumes in the immediate fashion of the time. Of symmetry, axial composition, symbolic distinction of personages, there is none; the feast is a real feast, and so real that even now we can imagine ourselves as partakers of it, which shows how easily a Florentine of the time could have set himself within its action and environment. Thus is achieved the realistic purpose of identifying the observer with imagined experience, which to meet this test must take on the eccentric and accidental composition which life itself assumes.

Mediaeval art displays a varied picture, but all of its phases are interrelated one to another, and all of them may be reduced on analysis to the three contributions with which this discussion commenced: the recognition of transcendental values, the establishment of emotion as a valid element of content, the introduction of the realistic point of view. These three in turn, we find at last, have the common denominator of the mediaeval insistence on spiritual reality. It is the strength and importance of its apprehension of spiritual truth that turned mediaeval art into emotional modes of expression, contemplative and rhythmic in the Byzantine, positive and ecstatic in the Romanesque and Gothic. The mediaeval attitude made away with the material walls which the classic world had set about experience and achieved what was no longer an idea, but a vision, of infinitude. It is the infinitude of its content that lends profundity to Byzantine rhythm and color; it is infinitude again that forces Gothic art into the realistic point of view and invests its concrete creations with the atmosphere of wonder. But I close with the melancholy certainty that my colleague of the Renaissance will take my last illustration, or something like it, and use it to exemplify the "new" humanism, or the "new" realism, of the Renaissance.

THE SPIRIT OF THE RENAISSANCE

Frank Jewett Mather, Jr.

The historian is always impelled to make great changes in the past more abrupt and drastic than they really were. Such exaggerations of tempo lend interest to his narrative. Your reader loves battles. To represent the Renaissance as a sort of valiant young Perseus promptly and gallantly winning his fight against that venerable sea monster, the Middle Ages, and liberating the human spirit in the lovely semblance of Andromeda—this may be to write excellent fiction. It is certainly to write very bad history.

Such Italian pioneers of the artistic Renaissance as Ghiberti, Brunellesco, Donatello were all trained in the mediaeval style. We are not to think of them as ever consciously repudiating their masters, or as being disapproved by their masters, as an academic teacher today might deplore a pupil gone *surréaliste*. All that really happened was that a few very talented young artists who were coming up early in the fifteenth century were alert and sensitive enough to scrutinize and understand certain antique statues and buildings that were being excavated, were perceptive enough to see that the superiority of these antiques rested on much calculation and observation of natural appearances, and were sensible enough to measure up the ruins and to study the human form more carefully and enthusiastically than their predecessors had done. There is very little consciousness of a new movement, just a set of shared new habits; there is no definite break with the past. These innovators, as we conceive them today, maintained their former religious loyalties, doubtless continuing to admire the Gothic sculpture and architecture which they were outgrowing. Undoubtedly they were moving in what today we call an individualistic and humanistic direction, but this is the way we find it convenient to describe them, and not the way they felt about themselves.

Moreover there had long been latent in the Middle Ages something of that expansive humanism and realistic curiosity which became a cardinal feature of the Renaissance. Nowhere was the exquisite insight of a Walter Pater more justly displayed than in his insistence that the lovely twelfth-century *chante-fable*,

Aucassin and Nicolette, marks the first dawn of the Renaissance. And I cordially agree with my friend and colleague Professor Morey in finding that much of what we call Renaissance realism was latent in the advanced and declining Middle Ages. The Renaissance hardly reaches a self-conscious stage before its end in the seventeenth century, with the foundation of academies and the beginning of professional art criticism. Perhaps the turning point is when the word *Gothic* emerges as a term of abuse.

We must think then of the pioneers of the Renaissance as eagerly adding new interests without disavowing old interests, of these new interests as gradually and quite benignly growing at the expense of the old interests, until we have a man who still accepts the mediaeval theology and ethics, but to whom they have come to matter rather little practically. For example, such contemporaries as Geoffrey Chaucer, Sir John Froissart, Petrarch, and Boccaccio held no different theories or scheme of life from their scholastic contemporaries. They merely indulged and exploited worldly interests more fully than had been usual, while they never let the inherited scheme of things cramp their style. They all directly or indirectly had drawn inspiration from the classic writers; they all had lived more intensely in view of the actual duration of human life than had been customary among older writers for whom life, at least in theory, was merely an inconvenient vestibule to eternity.

For convenience we may speak of such harbingers as the Pisani and Giotto as belonging to the proto-Renaissance; by the Early Renaissance we shall mean the fifteenth century; the full blooming of the Renaissance in Italy is the sixteenth century; in the North and West, the seventeenth.

A great period like the Renaissance is necessarily marked off from its near past by the discovery of new values. In the case of the Renaissance the acceptance of Aristotle's old maxim, "man is the measure of things," and of Socrates's "think as a mortal" made a wide breach with the Middle Ages, which, while ever emphasizing the little worth of man, had insisted that he think *sub specie aeternitatis*. These new values of the Renaissance are best described as humanistic. They rest upon the confidence that this life may be complete in itself, and not merely probationary to an eternity of weal or woe.

When the world became no longer a pilgrim way but a home, men naturally began to survey it with pride and curiosity. It is the age of discovery. Science begins to rest on research and experimentation rather than on what the Arabs had compiled from the Greeks. Medicine and surgery demand and obtain what the Middle Ages had never commanded, a correct human anatomy and the beginning of clinical records.

Such awakenings at first affect only an *élite*, and reach the mass of mankind tardily and incompletely. The effect of the Renaissance depended on a few thousand humanists whose learning and conviction were contagious. The significant fact is that somewhere after the year 1300 in Italy and 1450 in the North, it is easy to make a great worldly success without being in orders. In the late Middle Ages the chances were certainly not one in ten that anyone distinguished in the intellectual, artistic, or political field would not be a monk or prelate. From the Early Renaissance the chance was at least even that such a leading person would be a layman.

As the men of the Renaissance discovered the world of here and now, they naturally wished to make it as pleasant as possible. Their need evoked a humanistic art remaining generally true to the traditional religious themes but created in the new spirit. It will actually serve religion well, as diminishing the great distance set between the believer and his objects of worship by the highly conventionalized mediaeval style. Besides fairer things to see, the man of the Renaissance wants finer things to hear. Poetry gains a new eloquence, music invents fuller, richer, more complex modes.

As the humanist looked about his goodly world he found traces of old wisdom and old beauty. Where the man of the Middle Ages had quietly reshaped what little he knew about antiquity after his own image, the man of the Renaissance became vividly conscious of a difference and superiority in the old wisdom and beauty. Such reverence for a greater past might have prevented free study of nature, might have produced, as it did after the force of the Renaissance was spent, lifeless imitation. But the genius and insight of the pioneers of the Renaissance were shown in the perception that the ancients had a truer knowledge of nature and human nature than was elsewhere available. So in

discovering and reviving the ancient books and studying the ancient marbles the men of the Renaissance were merely pursuing the best beaten of several roads to self-knowledge and to understanding of nature.

Whenever an artist looks at his routine problems with such heightened attention to nature and with reference to what seem to him fine solutions in the past, you have the conditions for a Renaissance. On the practical side this means that the artist with a new awareness and sensitiveness looks all around the problem which formerly he had solved by use and wont. What had seemed easy, suddenly becomes difficult; what had barely enlisted the attention, becomes matter of ardent investigation. The aim is to find new solutions akin to but never identical with those of the past. Before this new awareness and concentration come to the artist, the scholars and men of letters have usually felt the same stirring of new thinking and feeling. Thus if we think of Giotto as the first complete Renaissance painter, we must also think of those predecessors in poetry and theology who freshened the air he breathed—a S. Francis, a Guido Guinizelli, a Dante.

Giotto's specific task was to reconsider the immemorial problem of figure painting in the light of his own study of natural appearances and of the late Hellenistic style as represented in the marbles and mosaics of Rome. Three quarters of a century earlier S. Francis of Assisi had reconsidered the routine Christian life in the light of his vivid apprehension of the life of Christ; Thomas Aquinas had reconsidered the whole matter of the dealings of God with men in the light of his own intense reflection and in that of the newly recovered logic and philosophy of Aristotle; the erotic idealism of the troubadours had filtered across the Maritime Alps into Italy, kindling in Guido Guinizelli and his followers down to Dante intensified lyrical feeling and the need of new and more worthy forms. All this produced that climate of curiosity, expansiveness, and research in which the eminently discreet and moderate Giotto could grow alongside his great exiled fellow townsman, Dante, into a universal figure.

With a pardonable exaggeration the exquisite sculptor of the Gates of Paradise writes that Giotto brought to life an art that for seven centuries had been dead. But the reason that Italy was to be the prime mover of the artistic Renaissance was precisely that

the Hellenistic style had never wholly died there. Century by century it was casually imitated by sculptors, architects, and painters, imitated often badly and without understanding.

It is a matter of the mint and cummin of scholarship that the sculptors Giovanni and Nicola Pisano and the great painter, probably Gaddo Gaddi, generally known as the Isaac Master, anticipated Giotto in the rediscovery of the antique. Giotto still remains the pioneer of the Italian Renaissance, the first to use the antique as a means of grasping the larger truth of appearances. In his early work at Assisi we see Giotto seeking to suggest the mass of the human form, but by elaborate and on the whole untelling methods. At Padua, after intervening years of re-education at Rome, we find mass and monumentality fully achieved. For the first time since the fall of Rome we find painted figures which challenge the sense of touch, have validity as living mass in space. The conquest of form is largely due to direct observation; its dignity and clarity are largely derived from intelligent study of late Hellenistic mosaics and sculptures.

To realize how radical was the reform of Giotto one need only recall the antecedent centuries in which painting proceeded almost without direct consultation of nature or antiquity, being for the painter primarily a task of decoration, for the layman a handsome and legible symbol. Read the mediaeval treatises on painting. Nothing much in them but *materialia* serving decorative splendor: how to make a fine blue, a permanent green, how to emboss and gild. Then turn to Leonardo da Vinci's *Trattato della Pittura*, full of counsel on the mental hygiene of the painter, of descriptions of the passions of the soul, of the refinements of natural appearances and the reasons therefor — hardly a word about the tools or materials of the painter, all this being taken for granted. Again, to realize the significance of Giotto's innovations, we need only consult the work of his very accomplished, sincere contemporary, Duccio. In assimilating the best contemporary style available, that of Neo-Hellenizing Byzantium, Duccio may be said to go halfway in a Renaissance direction. He even studied natural appearance, particularly the problem of space; but he did so analytically, coldly, and with no sense of the anterior problems of mass. So, while his production may seem more well-rounded, coherent, and gracious than that of Giotto,

it is merely the last sigh of the Middle Ages. There is in it no possible principle of growth. In Giotto, on the contrary, growth is constant. In his last years at Santa Croce he relaxes somewhat the emphasis on mass in favor of compositional relatedness, and he restudies the problems of space as something to be defined rather than taken for granted.

The principles of humanistic painting are complete in Giotto, but the practice remained to be variously investigated. Italian painting at its best was to be concerned with representation only so far as representation was compatible with the dignity of the classical tradition. Italian painting was on the whole to sacrifice decoration to truthfulness and energy of representation. Everything was to be referred to some *a priori* principle of harmony and orderliness. We must not think of this as a consecutive process but rather as a central tendency which in practice admitted of infinite variations. For a century after Giotto, painting merely liquidated its accounts with the decorative ideal of the Middle Ages. Then by a new act of observation and intuition Masaccio solved the problem of deep space and circumambient air. This radical departure is kept within the stylistic bounds of the Renaissance by Masaccio's reverence for the monumental figure construction of Giotto.

The century between Giotto and Masaccio, while on the whole reactionary in painting, was most fertile in literature. The effort of recovering the great books, especially the great Greek books of antiquity, was well launched by Petrarch and Boccaccio. Petrarch in his sonnets and songs had supplied the rhetoric and almost the emotions for several generations of frustrated but actively vocal lovers in many lands. In his safeguarded yet immensely active life, in such writing as his praise of the solitary life, he is one of the first scholars since antiquity to dare to propose self-development as a valid ideal. A complete and well-rounded existence in this world offended the mediaeval ground-principle of the little worth of our world of time as compared with the world of eternity. With Petrarch's abundant and charming correspondence began a sort of freemasonry of taste which extended across national and provincial lines. Boccaccio's contribution was, if less lasting, perhaps even more immediately influential. In the preface to his elaborate classical dictionary, *De*

Genealogiis Deorum Gentilium, he vindicated for poetry a divine value and sanction, was the first of many Renaissance poets to do this explicitly. In his *Fiammetta* with more concreteness and passion than Petrarch commanded, he made literary capital of the eternal theme of love and loss. His *Teseide* treated a classic theme with romantic fullness of description and sentiment, the noble rivalry of dear friends for the same lady. Here he opened new veins of sympathy, at times of irony, and cleared the way for adventurers in narrative poetry as widely scattered as Chaucer, Ariosto, Tasso, and Spenser. Meanwhile in distant England Geoffrey Chaucer revamped and condensed the *Teseide* into that swiftly moving romance, the *Knight's Tale*. *Filostrato*, which treated with zest the eternal theme of a light woman tragically loved, was expanded by Chaucer in *Troilus and Cresseyde* into what is virtually a metrical novel. Cresseyde's infidelity is no longer taken for granted, with "a woman like that," but is analyzed, explained, to a certain extent condoned, as the product of circumstances with which an ardent girl could not be expected to cope. In the hundred tales and anecdotes of the *Decameron*, Boccaccio gives a consummate example of narrative in an understanding and life-accepting mood. The book within a century had passed into French and English literature, remaining a major influence as late as La Fontaine and Dryden and up to today. What I wish to emphasize is the rapid spread of Italian literature, especially poetry, through Western Europe, its seminal importance in creating new modes of sensibility and in helping to find worthy expression therefor. With these few and inadequate words I must pass the chorus of sonneteers of France and England, the du Bellays and Ronsards; the Surreys, Wyatts, Sidneys, Spensers. Admitting the affectation and artificiality of much of this poetry, its springtime freshness is captivating, and it all testifies to the vitality of the Italian exemplars, especially of Petrarch, as not so much creating a style as exploring new ways of feeling and charting new ways of living.

It is evident that the Renaissance could not prevail in Northern and Western Europe until these new feelings and tastes had become no longer exotic but naturalized. Roughly speaking, this assimilation began actively somewhere around 1550 in England and France, when the art of the Renaissance in Italy was already declining into mannerism.

Where a Giotto and a Masaccio had succeeded intuitively, two generations of equally eager but less gifted painters had to proceed to build up a body of generally available knowledge: a Uccello, an Antonello da Messina, a Mantegna, a Jacopo Bellini, an Antonio Pollaiuolo. A Leonardo da Vinci will cope with the facts of human anatomy; a Brunellesco to plan his dome will anticipate the engineering knowledge of the next century; a Donatello and a Verrocchio will recover the lost art of casting large statues in bronze; a Luca della Robbia will substitute for the traditional and ephemeral paints a lovely glaze which makes terracotta sculpture only less durable than marble.

Much of the fifteenth-century experimentation is merely preparatory, much of its most charming painting is very lightly touched by Renaissance ideals, representing rather the permanent love of bustle and pageantry, the interest of a gay people in its own pleasures. Much of this painting has no more principle of coherence than its freedom from ecclesiastical pressure and its determining worldly taste. We must think of many levels of culture and taste, from that of Lorenzo de Medici's Platonic academy to that of the little shopkeepers and laborers. Certainly the taste that wanted an Allegory of Spring and Birth of Venus by Botticelli hardly admired the austerities of a Castagno or the easygoing amenity of a Gozzoli or Ghirlandaio.

Two generations of research culminated in Leonardo da Vinci. Only incidentally a painter and sculptor, in the intervals of military and civil engineering, of investigation of optics and the flight of birds, of invention in many branches, the mere marginal activities of his genius made Italian painting free of gracious, noble, and impassioned forms. What he had won through incessant personal effort was to be a kind of birthright for Raphael, Correggio, Michelangelo, Giorgione, and Titian. Leonardo had shown how painting could capture and make visible the most various passions of the soul. It remained for his aesthetic heirs to express these passions with greater breadth and variety.

Raphael seems to me the finest exemplar of the optimism of the Renaissance. Amid the most various occupations as panel, portrait, and mural painter, excavator and architect, he maintains a serene mastery. Before his lucid vision noble spaces open up and are peopled by grave and gentle folk from history and leg-

end. To the Umbrian youth all great folk of all ages are contemporaries and intimates. The gods and goddesses of Olympus receive him as a familiar. As his workmen recover beautiful marbles from the débris of old Rome, Raphael's sense of form finds new models and gains new refinements. Everything in the great frescoes of his best years, 1512-1514, is urbane, accessible, ingratiating. Nothing is pushed too far, nothing is slighted or misunderstood. The aspiring idealism of a Plato modestly accepts the golden mean of an Aristotle.

Surely the most eloquent single monument of the Renaissance is the Camera della Segnatura in which Raphael gives equal worth to the long tradition of a reasoned faith, to the philosophies and sciences growing out of Plato and Aristotle, to poetry under the patronage of Apollo and the Muses. This tenacity in holding on to every variety of value, however apparently incompatible, is the very essence of Renaissance thinking. It implies a great optimism, a conviction that behind apparent diversities is essential unity.

The charm too soon snaps. Raphael is swept into unhappy competition with the titanism of Michelangelo. His delicate and gracious balance of observation and acquired taste wavers before he has reached the halfway stage of life. Here is a parable of the precariousness of the Renaissance balance itself. Neo-Platonic idealism, experimentalism, worldly wisdom, historical divination, and traditional Christianity seem to blend momentarily in the Ficinos, Picos, Castigliones, Raphaels, and Titians in a rare type of human completeness. Then the link breaks and we have as we had before fractional men. That ideal of universality, which a Leonardo da Vinci had held before the painter and which a Raphael and a Titian came more variously and magnificently to exemplify, required of its devotee more hopefulness than is long permitted to any generation. Indeed it might be maintained that this ideal of living in the whole, the good, and the beautiful, implies not merely a somewhat shallow, however noble, optimism but also an ignorance of the vastness and variety of human possibilities, not to mention their limitations. On the other hand is it not precisely this adolescent hopefulness that constitutes the charm of the Renaissance poets and painters?

After all, the greatest artist figure of the Italian Renaissance

is a fractional man—neurotic, sublime, unreasonable, vain, timid Michelangelo. He handled himself badly in all worldly affairs, but he was responsive to grand revelations, and he trained himself unsparingly to make these visions permanent in marble or on the frescoed wall. As if to confute the tradition of urbanity which had guided and moderated the activities of the Renaissance, Michelangelo will show that the greatest art can come from an unprepossessing body and a badly warped soul. One may say that this appeal is to those spiritual values which the Middle Ages had blunted through use and wont. In his hands these old values take on tremendous vitality and importance and a kind of poignant novelty. Utilizing the technical progress of two centuries, master of his materials, he is completely unworldly in his expression. What counts with the creator of the Sistine ceiling, the slaves, the Moses, and the Medici tombs is a providential order in which man is of very little importance.

Unlike Raphael, whose loyalty embraced both the pagan and secular values, Michelangelo is narrowly Christian. There is no joy in his unrolling the destined course of mankind from chaos to the Last Doom. He faces the providential terror and accepts it grimly.

If Michelangelo is the greatest of Renaissance artists, is it not precisely because he transcends the Renaissance in facing life under the semblance of eternity? Such transcendence was both his strength and his weakness. It abolished all limits, and this, when he was happily inspired, was an advantage, a sore disadvantage when he was in routine production. Michelangelo marks not the fulfillment but the agony of the Renaissance. As a kind of ghost he survived its greatness for a full generation, occasionally reminding himself and the world of his continued existence in such amazing but also relatively unworthy expressions of his great gift as the Last Judgment and the frescoes of the Pauline Chapel.

If one had to choose just one painter to represent the Italian Renaissance, one would not go far wrong in choosing Titian. Venetian painting, while passing from a religious to a humanistic basis, had wisely avoided breaking with the decorative tradition of the Middle Ages, and such masters as Giambellino, Carpaccio, and Giorgione amplified the traditional color harmonies from

observation of the larger effects of nature. Thus landscape, which had either been neglected or practiced schematically in Central Italy, in Venice was painted with breadth and energy. The sense of an agreeably habitable world is first fully expressed in Venice. Titian inherited and mastered the somber harmonies of Giorgione. Then his color brightened to flower-bed blitheness and variety. His construction is in color, line and light and dark becoming relatively unimportant. He rejects the old static symmetries and invents dynamic patterns of composition, off-center arrangements alive with thrusts which balance across the surface and in depth. The new principle is triumphantly announced in the *Madonna of the Pesaro Family*, painted in 1526 when Titian was approaching fifty.

Rubens and Van Dyck will study the Titians of this dynamic sort and make the compositional system standard for Western Europe. Possibly this superior export value of Titian as compared with Raphael and Michelangelo is due to his wholehearted worldliness. He is singularly free from doctrine of any kind, and this means that both his Christian and his pagan mythologies are alive and contemporary. They lack the archaeological distance which we find in the *Parnassus*, *Galatea*, and *Psyche* of Raphael. It was the Venetian in Titian that refused to be awed by conventional values of any sort. If Titian is the most classic of Italian painters, it is precisely because he is at home with the saints and the Olympians. His ultimate values are human worth and dignity, which are timeless and ever contemporary. To express them he invents a beautiful and personal language of color. In his later years Titian becomes tragically Christian, forgoes much of his radiant color, and invents a method of suggestion which looks forward to Rembrandt and Velasquez. And here perhaps Titian finally admits the inherent inadequacy of Renaissance optimism. There is no complete vision of human values apart from a tragic sense of life.

Italian sculpture ran a course less sensational than that of painting with results on the whole less important. Through the Middle Ages there had been sporadic reference to the sculpture of Rome. In short, antique sculpture had never been lost to the extent that antique painting was. The developed Gothic sculpture of Italy in the thirteenth century readily assimilated something

from Hellenistic sculpture, from the high Gothic of France, I believe something from the Neo-Hellenistic ivories of Byzantium. So, late Gothic sculpture kept a pretty even and progressive course, gradually building up a body of professional knowledge, seeking greater refinement. Thus there is no great stylistic gulf between the Pisani and Orcagna, nor between Orcagna and the early works of Donatello and the whole *oeuvre* of Ghiberti.

When we reach sculptors of Renaissance mentality, such as Ghiberti, Donatello, Luca della Robbia, our old formula holds: we find a new and resolute study of nature guided by restudy of the antique. On the whole, Italian sculpture is greatest in its realistic endeavor. Donatello's "Il Zuccone," his best portraits, his equestrian Gattamelata; Verrocchio's Colleoni—these are perhaps the greatest Renaissance sculptures, for Michelangelo's seems to me to escape the category. Yet the most characteristic and delightful Renaissance sculpture is not these rare monumental pieces, but rather those exquisite statues and reliefs which are inspired by the graceful feminism of the late Gothic craftsmen and Ghiberti. What need to name Ghiberti's bronze gates for the Baptistery, conceived with a poet's sympathy and modeled, cast, and chiseled with a goldsmith's care; the gentle and stately Madonnas in white, blue, and meadow green and yellow by Luca della Robbia; the similar but more varied and complicated altarpieces of his nephew Andrea; the enigmatic adolescents of Verrocchio and Desiderio da Settignano, Desiderio's portrait reliefs in marbles created with infinitesimals of a millimeter more or less of thickness, Francesco Laurana's portrait busts—these are perhaps the most specific and ingratiating expressions of Italian sculpture of the Renaissance. And here we should not fail to note that most of this sculpture is really pictorial in its ideals. The admirable low reliefs, the Agostino di Duccios, for example, should be looked at as technically merely a sort of plastic draughtsmanship. We are dealing with sculpture neither as a modeled up or carved out object, but with a linear construction which happens to have the modeling shadow created not by differences of time but by very slight differences of plane.

The sculpture of Michelangelo offers a difficult problem. Much of it is, however skillful, merely mannered and badly over-

rated. The best of it, the so-called slaves for the tomb of Julius II, the Moses, the ideal portraits and the symbolic figures for the tombs of Giuliano and Lorenzo de Medici, are so instinct with a noble pessimism that it is impossible to treat them merely as art. They are symbols which reveal Michelangelo's despairing, deeply wounded, yet singularly valiant soul. Of that pride of life, that incorrigible optimism, which is the mark of the Renaissance, there is little trace. These grand frames will never act. Part of their tragic effect is precisely that, seeming to be of extraordinary physical potentiality, these titans and titanesses are set apart from physical action. These superb bodies are merely shrines in which some melancholy rite of contemplation is perpetually performed.

Of course on the material side these fragments from great uncompleted ensembles follow completely the Renaissance formula. The basis is a profound study of human anatomy, persistent reflection on the rationale of sculptural construction and composition, while the style is profoundly influenced by the study of such Pergamene sculptures as the torso of the Belvedere. But all this is relatively unimportant in comparison with the pathos and pessimism which emanate from whatever marble Michelangelo's chisel touched. The value is his personal value, and it is a value more or less universal and not characteristic of the Italian Renaissance. Indeed it might reasonably be maintained that only the early Michelangelos really belong to the Renaissance: the Madonnas at Bruges and in the Casa Buonarrotti, the Pietà in S. Peter's. The Renaissance temper required elegance which Michelangelo rarely sought, equanimity which Michelangelo never enjoyed. Whatever peace he attained was akin to that which the storm-tossed soul of S. Augustine hoped to find only precariously in the vision of God.

In architecture even more than in sculpture the Renaissance in Italy was less a revolution than a return to native forms. The structural logic of the pointed arch had never fully imposed itself upon Italian architects and builders. The round arch and its structural implications prevailed well into the thirteenth century. On the whole the pointed arch was treated merely as a factor in surface ornament, and the Gothic buildings of Italy, with all their ingratiating charm, have an exotic look when compared with the Early Christian basilicas, with such churches as Sant' Ambrogio

at Milan, the Cathedral at Pisa, San Lorenzo and Santo Spirito at Florence, the Pazzi Chapel, the Cancelleria — the baroque churches as a class. Even in the nominally Gothic buildings of Italy there is usually a survival of Roman habits, some trace of the classic orders and moldings, emphasis on horizontal courses which often retain a remotely classic character.

So when Vitruvius's manuscript was recovered early in the fifteenth century and its practical precepts promptly made available by Leonbattista Alberti, the Italian architects were not taking orders from an alien but renewing homage to a long lost master. Italy was to design its buildings with the use of the four orders very freely applied and interpreted. It will suffice for the static, papery loveliness of the Cancelleria, and for the extravagant almost surging front of Santa Maria della Pace. In short the four orders were merely counters with which the most various and exciting games could be played. The temper of the pioneers is charmingly revealed by one of them, Leonbattista Alberti, in his book on architecture. He is writing on the composing of varied parts to form a harmonious whole, and he begins with the analogy of a singer accompanied by various instruments. He then turns to his own art:

Finally these things should be executed according to study, or utility, or convenience, or verily according to a praiseworthy custom of men who know. In as much as setting one's self against custom deprives of grace, whereas consenting brings profit and good effect: and in as much as the best architects have indeed agreed that a division into Doric or Ionic or Corinthian or Tuscan, is more convenient than any of the others, so we should stand by them and use their motives in our work, not as forced to do so by laws, but forcing ourselves, under their instruction, when offering any novelty of our own, to see if it can acquire praise equal or greater than is theirs.

What Alberti proposed was liberty and emulation under law. He himself promptly invented the giant order, in the interest of dignity, his favorite word, though the giant order had no sanction from Vitruvius or indeed from ancient precedent. In the sixteenth century, Serlio and Palladio, who today pass for pedants, used the classic forms quite inventively.

Now it may seem unfortunate that in adopting the classical orders the Italian Renaissance was taking over from Rome a system that had almost no relation to structure. It was a question of doing something about walls in a sunny climate where fenestration had to be much limited. It was also largely a problem of

facing a structure of inferior material with some more precious material. That had been the Roman habit. Greece had escaped it and could build integrally because she did not require roofed buildings of great size, did not make huge civic or palatial structures. For better or for worse Rome had stressed surface decoration slightly related or even unrelated to structure. The Middle Ages in Italy had met the problem by incrustation and blind or open arcades. In short the Renaissance introduced no new principle into Italian architecture but merely substituted, for a romantic variety of decorative expedients, the four orders. The innovation was important chiefly because it made possible for the first time coherent cities. The general effect of Renaissance Florence or baroque Rome, of neo-classic Turin or Cassel or Paris may seem to be more precious than any single building. Naturally I am aware that an austere functionalist will blow this harshly down the wind. But an entirely functional architecture in Italy was quite impossible save at the sacrifice of grace, which the Italians preferred to logic.

Take a situation where the actual structure is cheap—rubble, brick, concrete—where freestanding buildings are exceptional, where villas, even, getting all the light they need from the court, must present blank walls to the world: the spectator was in the position of seeing fronts rather than buildings. Naturally, then, the architect made the fronts as fine as possible. And this at first meant delicate pilasters, rustication, molded stringcourses, daintily turned capitals, exquisite repose, as later it meant exciting explosions upward and outward in broken pediments, coming and going stringmoldings, whirling escutcheons—all the dynamic apparatus of the baroque.

Now it is easy with the wisdom of hindsight to say that there were better solutions of the problem of the wall and the façade than checkerboarding them with pilasters and moldings or casing them with extraneous columns. Granted, but such solutions had never been standardized and, while offering delightful isolated examples, had hardly attained the coherence and dignity of a style. In short they lacked authority. If anybody thinks the Italian architect was a fool for submitting to authority, that he would have done better in acting as if he were the only architect in the world, making the only building in the world for the only client

in the world, why, such a thinker is simply welcome to his opinion. Again I can no longer indulge the Ruskinian pathos in which I was bred, in seeing a lovely and vital Gothic art in Italy killed by the Renaissance. I see no reason to suppose that if Gothic design had continued in Italy to the middle of the sixteenth century, as it did in France, England, Germany, and Spain, we should really be much the better off for fine buildings. Except in Spain and Portugal, which developed in the Plateresque and Manuel style, saving extravagances, the life pretty well went out of the Gothic style everywhere about 1400. We do better, while admitting the somewhat papery character of architectural design in Renaissance Italy, to enjoy its graciousness.

And we should not forget that Italy in the central and domical designs of Brunellesco, Bramante, and Michelangelo was working on the most fundamental of architectural problems, namely design in space. Unhappily circumstances thwarted the fullest execution of the noblest of architectural ambitions. Brunellesco's dome had to surmount Talenti's building; Michelangelo's dome was to be dwarfed inside and out by Bernini's medallioned piers and façade. What this poetry of space might have been we may realize best in such sacristies as the Pazzi Chapel or those of San Lorenzo and Santo Spirito, or churches built or finished late, such as the Madonna of Consolation at Todi or the Salute at Venice. Indeed the baroque designers generally had a fine feeling for design in space, but by a paradox they tended to destroy through painted or sculptured decoration the space they had so carefully invented, opening their interiors to the world and letting the world in. So while no Italian architect was to handle the problem of space with the lucidity and sublimity of the great Byzantine designers, at least they revived the ideal of planned and finite spaciousness as distinguished from mere bigness. Finally the Italian architects of the Renaissance inherited and developed the notion of an ideal geometry, a canon of proportions, as necessarily underlying all great design. That way, of course, lie all the pedantries, but that way also lie the great inventions. The architect who cannot feel proportionately is lost: he may or may not bring his feeling to what Leonardo da Vinci called mathematical demonstrations.

Painting, sculpture, architecture, literature, incipient science

had all been the expression of a new Italian Humanism, of an emancipation of the Italian spirit, for "Humanism," writes that admirable critic, Geoffrey Scott, "is the effort of men to think for themselves, and to abide by the logic of results." Such individualism, however, had constantly been tempered by reverence for the remote past of Greece and Rome. The Italian artist was, of course, expressing himself, but he was shaping his self-expression in view of noble precedents. Fortunately these ancient exemplars were too rare and too vaguely apprehended to constitute a tyranny. Here it is significant that the importance of Italian art is in inverse ratio to the richness of its archaeological background. Painting is the great art of Renaissance Italy, possibly because the Italian painter really saw very few antique paintings, but had to work from the native resources of his art and from sensitive inferences from the parallel arts of sculpture, architecture, and poetry.

Then the self-expression of the Italian painter was for a couple of centuries of preparation steadied by the need of coping with technical difficulties. And this need again made for humility, for the artist was merely recovering what he supposed to be a lost skill. Indeed the whole endeavor was to relearn across centuries of confusion the orderliness and dignity of the Roman way. Thus the Italian artist found in his classicizing taste reasons for both pride and humility. No period has more deeply valued personal fame, but personal fame itself was a sort of filial oblation to the great ancestors whose teaching and example had made it possible. So, while freely admitting the occasional excesses of the Italian Renaissance and its frequent and usually most ingenious pedantries, it seems one of those rare moments in human history where a balance had been attained that gave to a multitude of men of various and eager talent an exceptional opportunity for its happy development.

The Renaissance style breaks down when there is such a body of technical knowledge that execution is easy for everyone, breaks down in a narrowly professional vanity and self-exploitation for which classical antiquity is no longer chastening or exemplary, but merely a box of handy tricks. What will happen to the art of painting when any intelligent eighteen-year-old boy can draw the nude from memory in any difficult foreshortening? When one

can practice an art ably before he can feel it at all? Giorgio Vasari really tells us when he boasts that his generation, growing up about 1540, could paint a picture in hours that would have required days in Raphael's time. Although generally a critic of sensitive taste, it never occurs to him that the painting brushed off in a few hours might not be worth painting at all.

It was perhaps inevitable that mannerism should follow style. What Leonardo da Vinci, Correggio, Raphael, Michelangelo, Andrea del Sarto, and Titian had achieved before 1530 might well seem to exhaust the possibilities of the grand style. It is far easier to blame the archmannerist Francesco Mazzola called Parmigianino and his followers than to say what they could or should have done. What they did was to seek formulas for prettiness and gracefulness: limbs that swelled at the muscles and shrank delicately at the joints, eyes vivid, lips tremulous, postures ingeniously intricate — such was the stock in trade of Parmigianino, Salviati, and Bronzino in narrative subjects. Of course such very able and original painters as Pontormo and Baroccio were deeply tinged with mannerism. It blends with a sound traditional naturalism in the sculpture of Benvenuto Cellini, and dominates that of Giovanni da Bologna. Architecture meanwhile was moving definitely toward the pondered sensationism of the baroque. All these diversities were eventually canalized in the right wing of the florid and the left wing of the realistic baroque, but that lies apart from our theme, is rather the tumultuous beginning of modern art than a stormy last phase of that of the Renaissance. It was with a true instinct that all his conservative contemporaries regarded Caravaggio as the destroyer of the grand style, their error being the failure to see that it had really perished more than half a century before Caravaggio emerged. The query is interesting, what if some equally able but less truculent realist had appeared about 1530? Might not some synthesis of the grand style and realism have been possible, some smooth transition from Renaissance to modern art? It is easier to ask these questions than to answer them. But the synthesis actually achieved between the Venetian style and that of Caravaggio in the seventeenth century at least makes our theoretical queries suggestive.

The Renaissance outside of Italy offers so incoherent a spectacle that certain critics have denied that there is properly speak-

ing a Northern Renaissance. At least the pattern of the Renaissance in the Low Countries, France, Germany, Spain, England, was quite unlike the Italian pattern. The point of agreement is the transition from an exhausted decorative convention to some sort of realism. The substantial difference is that the realism of the North was not of a humanistic or selective order and was not tempered by reference to the antique. Almost concurrently with Italy, Northern Europe too began to be interested in recovering classic literature, but on the whole classicism outside of Italy was an academic accomplishment, not a widespread enthusiasm and influence. Then the Frenchman, Flamand, German, however good a reader of the classics, had no feeling that they were his own. The transalpine artist felt no supervising Roman looking over his shoulder as he worked, reminding him to be worthy of his Latin origins. Ultimately the influence of the Italian Renaissance swept northward and westward in successive waves, but this was well along in the sixteenth or early in the seventeenth century, when the glories of the Italian Renaissance were already well past and its memories confused with later and somewhat alien ideals.

When we speak of the Early Renaissance beyond the Alps, we are really thinking of the painting of the Low Countries, Germany, France, and Spain, of the sculpture of Claus Sluter and his Burgundian followers, of the wood carving and the painting of Michael Pacher, of the bronze sculpture of Peter Vischer. It will be seen that the division between the late Gothic and Renaissance styles is often badly blurred in concrete cases. For example it seems to me absurd to consider that greatest of German painters, Mathias Grünewald, anything but a Gothic figure, though he commanded much of the new knowledge of the Renaissance. Again it could be reasonably maintained that all the greatest designs of Dürer are Gothic in spirit, and of the Renaissance only in superficial features and in their extraordinary learning.

The case is even clearer in architecture. There is, barring a handful of fantastic buildings in France and England, very little Early Renaissance architecture of a notable sort beyond the Alps. Instead we have various complications of late Gothic design, at best with very superficial and partial adoption of classic features. We deal with charming buildings in the châteaux of the Loire

and in a handful of the Elizabethan country houses, but hardly with greatly designed buildings. Renaissance architecture in the North is, then, a retarded importation from Italy well along in the sixteenth century, and chiefly effective in the seventeenth, when the encyclopaedic profusion of Vitruvius had been conveniently codified by Serlio and Palladio. It synchronizes closely with the invasion of France and England by Petrarchism, with the translation of Plutarch and Homer, with the universal vogue of Ariosto and Tasso.

I have gone forward too fast in order to show that there really were two almost disassociated Renaissances in the North, the first beginning pretty early in the fifteenth century, substituting for the purely decorative ideals of the late Gothic style an ideal of analytical realism, running its course for about a century, then quickly arrested and superseded in the sixteenth century by a somewhat indiscriminate imitation of the Italian manner, which in turn led in the seventeenth century to a second Renaissance distinguished by such genial assimilation of Italian ideals as we find in Rubens and Poussin.

Within the reasonable space allotted to me, I can only briefly suggest the character of the native Northern realism. It wanted to tell the truth and, as it understood it, the whole truth about what it saw. Where Renaissance painting in Italy began with the amazing syncopations with which Giotto expressed the mass, movement, and feeling of the figure, the Flemish Renaissance in the painting of Hubert and Jan van Eyck and Rogier de la Pasture treated the figure in all elaboration, with little generalization, and almost without monumental intention. When a Giotto took his landscape features directly from the Italo-Byzantine formulas, as mere indications or symbols, Hubert van Eyck and his followers through Memling, Gerard David, and Massys created widespreading plaisances, where trees and flowers grow, and rivers widen under radiant clouds across which birds fly. Where a Giotto set up a sort of flat to tell that a room is meant, a Hubert or Jan van Eyck painted a room with its proper illumination and its elaborate furniture, or a towering church-interior with its complicated vaulting, stone carving, stained glass.

What this means in terms of the taste of the Italian and the Northern artist is that in Italy the ideal was humanistic. Man

had his importance apart from his particular setting. Here Giotto, who merely symbolizes his settings, Masaccio, who summarizes them most ably, really guide Raphael and Michelangelo. But a Flemish painter, always admitting a few brilliant exceptions (residual mediaevalism in Rogier de la Pasture and the unknown painter of the *Pietà* of Villeneuve), could hardly conceive of a person without a setting almost as inseparable as a garment. From the first there was a balance, almost a competition, of interest. Do you look longest at Jan van Eyck's Saint Barbara, or on the busy doings in the tower behind her, and the distant hills? Are you really as much interested in devout Chancellor Rollin and Our Lady as you are in the sparkling river landscape that you glimpse beyond their loggia?

Recent psychology has taught us that an environment is not something separate from ourselves, but rather an extension of ourselves which we carry around with us. Without any psychology the early painters of Flanders felt this, and it became their most permanent legacy to posterity. The figure in its habitual setting, nothing scamped of either interest—this is the formula that through Old Bruegel, Frans Hals, Vermeer, and a host of admirable little masters sufficed to guide a most intimate and charming art. Rembrandt the formula contented only now and then. In his own fashion he was a humanist. The circumstances and setting of feeling seemed to him less important than feeling itself. So his art, despite superficial differences, is really much akin to the Italian grand style. The chief difference is that the grand style is aristocratic, finding its grandeur in good society, while Rembrandt finds his grandeur among the very poor, indeed almost anywhere. To complete our contrast, the Northern artists who are deeply versed in the Italian style will generally avoid the specific setting. A Rubens will treat it decoratively after the Venetian fashion; a Poussin will give it a public character, or even in the great landscapes of his later years promote it to independent estate. From the moment that specific setting seems as important as the figures, the eventual emergence of an independent landscape art is inevitable. Its full development in the North may better be considered under Modern Art.

The conscious endeavor to assimilate the Italian style in the North and West is a familiar story which here must be retold

most briefly. Long before there was any question of a Renaissance, Italy had a wide prestige. Thousands of western Europeans annually made the pilgrimage to Rome; on jubilee years the pilgrims were counted in the hundred thousands. They duly visited the seven great basilicas, and some used their eyes. Italian art and Italian artists had been called to England, France, and Bohemia before the Renaissance. And when early in the fifteenth century the Flemish miniature painters moved toward analytical realism and a courtly style, they were supposed to be responding to Italian influence, for the work of the Limbourgs and their contemporaries was called Lombard work, *Ouvraige de Lombardie*. In the work of Hubert van Eyck also a certain new urbanity and dignity is most reasonably accounted for on the theory that he had seen idealistic late Gothic sculptures and paintings in Italy. In short the most indigenous move in a humanistic direction seems to be that of Claus Sluter and his school. In the largeness of his vision and the conciseness of his expression he may be regarded as the Giotto of the North, and it is unfortunate that his influence was brief and partial.

Before considering the direct and conscious imitation of the Italian style in the North and West, just a word on collateral interests. It is customary to credit to the Renaissance all signal expressions of individualism of whatever sort. On this basis, Erasmus and Luther; Sir Thomas More and Calvin; Rabelais and Ronsard; Montaigne and the Reverend John Knox; Hernando Cortez and the Chevalier Bayard may all be lumped together as great Renaissance figures, but if you admit such a grouping, what becomes of your Renaissance? We need to remind ourselves that simple individualism is not a distinctively Renaissance trait. Indeed in its cruder form it is the most hardy of human perennials. The special characteristic, the real novelty of the Renaissance, was humanism, an individualism tempered by respect for authority in the past and for informed opinion in the present. Above all, the Renaissance spirit is secular and not religious. Religion is accepted as a going concern and traditional authority, but from popes to poets it is not allowed to interfere much with the day's work or play. So we cannot claim Luther for the Renaissance, though in his courage and massive common sense he illustrated some of its finer qualities. John Knox is no more a man of the

Renaissance than is Savonarola. The denunciatory prophet may arise at any time, indeed he works on a timeless scale. A Calvin, admirable prose writer, greatest theologian since the Aquinate, again, despite the sympathy he aroused in humanistic circles, is too otherworldly to be a true Renaissance figure. Ultimately his teaching, while of the most audaciously individualistic sort, an adventure in eternity, was life-denying, whereas the very central conviction of the Renaissance was the self-contained and sufficient value it set upon life here and now. In temper, then, Calvin is rather the last and perhaps the greatest of the mediaeval system-makers than a man of the Renaissance. What makes the scholar-priest, Erasmus, perhaps the central figure of the Northern Renaissance in literature is his sympathetic humanity, wit, humor, beautiful Latinity, intelligent service to education, ardor for ancient literature. His being a priest, a devout Christian and in terribly confused times an obedient churchman, is merely a paradoxical and almost superfluous grace of his many-sided humanism.

What of François Rabelais? Superficially his insistent coarseness seems to set him apart from the Renaissance or relegate him to its bad society. But the case is not so simple. Are Gargantua and Pantagruel merely majestic torrents of sewage? or are they grandiose torrents which reveal only the amount of sewage normal in any great stream? Is not Rabelais's complete and impartial acceptance of life, whether biological, physiological, or psychical, precisely what the Renaissance should have made generally had it not been restrained by some residuum of mediaeval idealism and by its own Platonism? And this Franciscan friar and physician creates one of the noblest symbols of the Renaissance in an abbey whose single rule should be to do what you please, an abbey inhabited by well-born and well-bred men and women who knew how to use such liberty nobly. After all, Rabelais is merely preaching the old message of a sound mind in a sound body; and if he often rubs the body in egregiously, it is an exaggeration natural in a physician, who clearly perceived how little the body had had its due from the moralists and even the scientists of the past and of his own day.

His notion of the qualifications for the Abbaye of Thelème—courtesy, kindness, generosity, gayety—recall Baldassare Castiglione's plan for the nurture of a gentleman. François Rabelais's

ideal is more genial and less exclusive. He trusts nature to produce beautiful souls in beautiful bodies, and without niggardliness. He undoubtedly underestimates the need of training and discipline, and we shall find in Jean Jacques Rousseau's famous doctrine of innate human virtue merely a proletarian extension of a formula which Rabelais had kept aristocratic. At bottom Rabelais sets his hope in eugenics in the wider sense, a position proper to a doctor and still valid. The danger of Rabelais's confidence in nature is that she does not teach the beautiful soul how to be master of the beautiful body. The danger of Castiglione's appeal to training and discipline is that while seeking to make the gentleman you may make only the snob or the prig. Finally that attitude of François Rabelais may be said to transcend Renaissance individualism and to look forward to the comradeship adumbrated by the great radical thinkers and chanted somewhat raucously by Walt Whitman. The superior individual is one who lives well and gladly with his fellows. This is the true humanism, and of all the Renaissance humanists Dr. François Rabelais seems to me one of the greatest and most genuine. The monstrous and boundless character of his thinking and writing somewhat disguises, especially from tender-minded readers, the courage of his hatred of all hypocrisy, the nobility of his ideal of the good life.

The assimilation of the Italian style in the North and West of Europe was singularly retarded and incomplete. The immediate salutary and complete assimilation was in literature. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Italy produced rather little that compares favorably with Ronsard, du Bellay, Montaigne, Corneille, Molière; Marlowe, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton. Generally, artists, being as a class less educated than men of letters, work on feelings and ideas which have earlier gained currency from books. Painting and sculpture then are normally a full generation behind poetry. Moreover the transmission of culture through books is always not merely more prompt but also more effectual than through the visual arts. In a small study with a few score well-chosen books I am free of the whole world of thought and feeling, whereas if I am a painter seeking self-education from the great exemplars, I am under all kinds of restrictions of time and place. Again a French or English man of

letters when studying the newly recovered classics or the current classics of Italy could be pretty sure he was dealing with the best. An artist had no such certainty. The very richness and variety of the sculpture, painting, and architecture of the Italian Renaissance would easily be confusing. It was very easy to mistake what was currently fashionable in Italy for what was great. France for nearly a century remained under the influence of second-rate Italian painters, through the sheer accident that Henry II preferred them or could not persuade better Italian painters to take his pay. The Flemish enthusiasts who through the sixteenth century studied in Italy chose their masters casually, on the whole, and did what their masters required. We must recall that the critical hierarchy of merit for Italian artists was not even provisionally established till toward the end of the seventeenth century, with the writing of Félibien and De Piles. It required a very personal act of divination for a Rubens and a Poussin to perceive the central importance and exemplary character of the work of Titian, whom criticism from Vasari down had treated with a certain condescension.

Perhaps the loveliest moment of the transalpine Renaissance is that of transition from the native realism to the new Italian style. It is the moment of Jean Goujon's nymphs and caryatids, of Lescot's Louvre, of Altdorfer's Satyr Family. It is interesting to note that the emulators of the Italian style often wanted more refinement than Italy herself had attained. Compare the woodcuts made in Italy for the Dream of Poliphitus with the copies, or rather versions, made in France about half a century later. The plump and provocative little nudes made in Venice assume a fairly Botticellian fastidiousness and aloofness in Paris. Similarly there are refinements of feeling and diction in du Bellay and Ronsard which you could hardly parallel in their exemplars, Petrarch, Bembo, Serafino d'Aquila.

It remains only to trace the ultimate course of the Italian influence beyond the Alps. Germany made only fitful and incomplete assimilation of the Italian manner until the seventeenth century was well advanced. In short, the very vigorous architectural achievement of the southern German states and of Austria at this period falls under the baroque and the rococo. We have already noted that the revival of learning in the German states remained

academic and had little effect on general culture. Moreover the numerous small grand duchies and kingdoms which constituted the Germanies retained till the eighteenth century a provincial character entirely alien to the cosmopolitanism of the Renaissance spirit. At best the Renaissance in Germany was a fashion ill understood and without popular support. Sometimes I feel that Holbein, especially in mural decorations, is the only significant Renaissance painter of Germany, but Holbein himself seems less German than the first of wandering cosmopolitan painters.

In Spain the case was much the same. For most of the sixteenth century the Italian style was a favorite article of luxury and fashion. Except in the painting of El Greco it took no deep root. And it seems to me that the art of El Greco is not really a Renaissance problem. Primarily it is a personal problem, and once you have understood the fanatical intensity of El Greco, it makes really no difference whether you regard his art as a sublimation of the contemporary mannerism or as premonitory of the baroque. Superficially, El Greco shared certain Renaissance tastes, was a good classic and conservative in architectural design; his titanism finds precedents in Michelangelo, in Tintoretto, and the last phase of Titian, but his extravagance, his detachment from antique precedents, are traits alien to the humanism of the Renaissance. In short it is just about as sensible and enlightening to classify El Greco as a Renaissance or baroque painter as it is to describe William Blake as an English painter of the Greek revival.

For the rest, the Renaissance drove out the lingering Gothic style, and tempered and aided the formation of a native realism. Velasquez if he grew mainly out of Caravaggio's tenebrism, also drew discreetly from Titian. In sculpture we should on the whole think of the Renaissance rather as giving new methods than as providing new feelings and motives. Such essentially Spanish painters as Zurbarán, Murillo, and Valdés Leal are typically baroque figures—hence out of the reckoning in any treatment of the Renaissance.

The Protestant Reformation and the Wars of Independence somewhat removed Holland from Renaissance influence. As in Germany, the eager study and editing of the classics was a private and academic accomplishment without general effect. No

real assimilation of the Italian manner was necessary, and none was made except in the tardy and not very noteworthy acceptance of the four orders as the indispensable factors in architectural design. On the other hand the Italian style constantly supplied new resources to the native realism. Few of the good Dutch painters are entirely free from Italian influence. Rembrandt constantly had his eye on the great Italians. But in general whatever Holland gained from Italy in the seventeenth century must be regarded merely as auxiliary to the native and sound realistic tradition which had come down from the Van Eycks through Massys and Old Bruegel to Frans Hals and the little masters.

In Catholic Flanders was played the last act of the Venetian Renaissance in the copious and nobly athletic art of Peter Paul Rubens. As a man and as an artist he is one of the finest and most typical of Renaissance figures. If anyone chooses to classify him as a baroque artist, let it go at that, but I feel that Rubens was quite unlike his baroque contemporaries in that he painted for his theme and not for the gallery. As a decorator he respects the space with which he deals and refuses to follow the baroque habit of painting the actual limited space away in behalf of a suggestion of unlimited space. At all points Rubens is temperamentally nearer Titian than he is to Luca Giordano or Pietro da Cortona. His discretion is as marked as his exuberance. He loves the classics and lives them. He is confidently life-accepting and yes-saying. Whatever is sick, weak, mean in the world he simply does not see. Thus there never was an art more consistently healthy and heroic. It could readily be argued that there was something superficial in the optimism of this versatile child of fortune, that he saw life too steadily and simply. But any limitations of Rubens's character seem to me precisely the limitations of the Renaissance itself, the failure to take reasonable account of human weakness and baseness.

Rubens is the indispensable link between the Venetian Renaissance and modern painting. He rejected the unfunctional grandeur of the Roman school, standing firmly on the sort of grandeur that a good eye can observe in action. In this choice he was the true successor of the Venetians, whose figure style was based not on preconceived graces but on function. So the art of Rubens generation by generation after his death has inspired suc-

cessors of kindred type. Without the background of Rubens we should hardly have rejoiced in our own time in the sensitive and vital painting of Auguste Renoir.

In France in the sixteenth century there was no assimilation of the central principles of the Renaissance. In painting, the so-called Fontainebleau School could not rise above its fountain-head, the mannerists Primaticcio, Rosso, Niccolò d'Abate. In architecture there is a move toward a new dignity and orderliness, but on the whole we have a picturesque and illogical bedizening with alien classic elements of structures conceived in the Gothic fashion. Much that was picturesque was built in this mixed manner, as every lover of the châteaux and transitional churches of France well knows, but until the French architects after much trial and error had learned their Serlio and Palladio they achieved not a style but a manner. It is really in the field of ornament that the new French taste first fully expressed itself. Taking over the familiar classic elements, the palmette, the rinceau, the candelabrum, the arabesque with figures, the French designers added a crispness and elegance quite their own. Where the Italian mood was *adagio*, that of France was *staccato*—something more brilliant, one may say more witty, than the Italian exemplars. Indeed the real counterpart for the admirable poetry of the *Pléiade* is in none of the major arts but rather in the exquisite printers' ornaments with which Geoffroy Tory and his successors adorned their books, or in the designs which the best enamelers made for the perfume flasks and glove boxes of their *Cassandras* and *Olives*.

In the early years of the seventeenth century France did more quickly and intelligently what Flanders had done somewhat fumblingly during a couple of generations, encouraged her more ambitious artists to go to Italy and try out the competing styles. The giants of the Renaissance had already passed into history. What was alive and available in Rome was the eclecticism of the *Caracci* and their followers and the proletarian tenebrism of *Caravaggio*. Most French painters dallied with both manners, and settled down, as did Simon Vouet, schoolmaster for his entire generation in Paris, on the eclectic maxims. Soon a sound practice in painting became the rule. It was fostered by the Royal Academy founded in 1648 and strongly reorganized in 1662.

Academies, we should insist, are not Renaissance institutions. They appear in Italy under the auspices of mannerists and decadents only after the creative force of the Renaissance was spent. Their claim to authority no real Renaissance artist would have admitted. When there is an institution that sets for the artist the limits of his self-expression, that knows what he should be taught and how he should work, we have passed into an air which the Renaissance artist could not breathe. Academic authority is, for better or worse, a French invention. The numerous academies of Italy were chiefly honorary bodies, quite undoctrinal, and on the practical side mattering not at all. The more logical and less genial character of France required that her Academy should function, and it has functioned continuously, so that while academic authority has often been flouted in France, nothing is made in France regardless of the existence of such authority. Where it fails to obtain obedience it at least conditions opposition.

The most consistent expression of the French genius in the seventeenth century is in architecture, as its greatest is in philosophy and literature. In architecture, the move toward planned and rationalized cities, the carrying through of such a design as that of Versailles, consistent from the chimney pieces and mirrors to the hedges and fountains, in general the creation of vast and reasonable ensembles is, I feel, more important than any single building or any single feature of such ensembles. And even those who deplore the tyranny of the four orders must admit that only on the basis of some such prescribed units of design were the great architectural harmonies of Louis XIII's and Louis XIV's France possible. One may feel a certain monotony in the buildings of Renaissance Paris, may indulge a nostalgia for the picturesqueness of the Cluny and the Place des Vosges, but Paris itself is not architecturally monotonous. Its orderliness comprises joy, a mental delectation, lacking in more varied and picturesque cities. It will be noted that the architects of Paris really were doing what the Renaissance sculptors of Italy had done, going behind the visible Roman monument to the Greek exemplar. Between late Greek times and those of Louis XIII cities grew Top-sylike. France was recovering the most authentic Greek tradition when she began to plan her cities.

In sculpture seventeenth century France produced rather lit-

tle of permanent consequence except the heroic and somewhat oratorical work of Puget. And he so clearly is of baroque temper that in any discussion of the Renaissance he is named only to be excluded.

The last great artist of the Renaissance is Nicolas Poussin. With lucid and unperturbed intelligence he envisaged the antique across three generations of most various assimilation. His serene and balanced temperament perforce rejected as alien to itself the melancholy sublimity of Michelangelo and the truculent realism of Caravaggio. From his nearest models, the Carracci and Domenichino, he sensibly drew much, but he looked behind them to their models. He saw that, considered formally, Raphael was nearest of all Italian painters to the antique, but he saw also that in temper and actual achievement Titian was the greater master and nearer the ancients. Poussin on the whole represents the nostalgic phase of the Renaissance, its longing for an older and fairer world. One may say that where Rubens had brought Olympus joyously to the modern man, Poussin wistfully pointed the modern man back to Arcadia and Olympus. In his later years having made himself at home in the heroic age, Poussin seeks a noble homelessness in the vision of a nature that was old before the gods and will not have lost its youth when man shall be no more. Poussin ends as Michelangelo had ended before him in awe of a general order of providence in which man is of little importance. And the lesson of these lives is that it is hard for a lofty and serious nature to die a humanist.

In view of recent investigation it should be superfluous to defend the Renaissance against the myth of its exceptional depravity and cruelty. There seems no reason to believe that the small minority of brutal and vicious people in the world has varied much proportionately within historic time. The repute any period gets for wickedness depends mostly on its own writers and ultimately on the popular historians and historical novelists. In perfidy and cruelty Cesare Borgia was a mere tyro as compared either with Ezzelino da Romano in S. Francis's times or with Adolf Hitler in our own. But Cesare Borgia's goings on were thoroughly written up by the most widely read of publicists, Machiavelli, and were vividly described in a historical novel which has been virtually compulsory reading for a century,

Alessandro Manzoni's *I Promessi sposi*, while nobody knows about Ezzelino and there has not yet been time to see the Führer in true historical perspective. Or facing the problem of historical disrepute in another light, what will be the opinion of a future investigator of the American morality of our times if his chief source of information should be the novels of William Faulkner and Theodore Dreiser? In a period so abundantly documented and bewritten as the Renaissance it is easy to find anything you look for. I believe the impartial investigator of the Renaissance will find the balance of evidence is for the usual social and civic virtues among the people generally, with the enlightened humanism of the few as its fine flower. But in retrospect it must be admitted that the humanism of the Renaissance was a precarious basis both for life and for art. As the world grew older, it would now turn back from individualism to authority, now seek escape in the vastnesses of nature as science revealed them. The essential unity, serenity, balance of the art of the Renaissance will yield to diversity. The aristocratic vision of the gentleman will give way to the competing ideals of the scientist, statesman, and man of affairs. Art will be less the expression of a civilization than an escape. Of course such transvaluations are inevitable. Yet the mind goes back longingly to periods in which values were stable. Such periods in Western civilization were the fifth and fourth centuries in Greece, the Augustan age in Rome, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Western Europe, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. If one prefers the Renaissance, it is perhaps because it made fewer harsh repudiations and because with both modesty and confidence it drew more widely and more wisely on the past experience of the race than any period before or after. It was a happy interval between too little knowledge and a staggering surplus thereof. At no time, not even I think in Greece, has man so fully grasped his resources and used them so thriftily to dignify and adorn his citizenship in the world. Commanding infinitely greater resources, may the modern world learn to use them with a correspondingly superior wisdom.

MODERN ART

Everett V. Meeks

We have listened with the most vivid interest to the authoritative addresses of my distinguished colleagues on the classic, mediaeval, and Renaissance periods. The burden of attempting to bring this symposium of art history up to date now falls upon my inadequate shoulders.

What do we mean when we speak of modern art? Until a few years ago general survey courses in art in our colleges and universities tended to conclude with the discussion of the eighteenth century. Consequently in broad usage the term modern art should perhaps cover the nineteenth century and the twentieth to date. Nevertheless I am assuming that it may be in order for us to interpret modern art as more definitely contemporary art. To many, however, even this term may not indicate a sufficiently restricted field. For only too often, when the term modern art is used, there is meant merely those phases of artistic expression which by their intense progressiveness are undertaking to free themselves from the older and perhaps even sounder methods, standards, and purposes which have heretofore been continually recognized as valid through the history of art. And when all is said and done, modern art is the art of modern times. Upon certain aspects of this phase of art I plan to speak.

I have ventured occasionally to use the term modernistic to describe and to distinguish the more digressive of contemporary movements. Latterly, however, I have been sharply called to task as thus employing a derogatory term and thereby attempting to stigmatize such progressiveness. Such was not and is not my intention; nor do I find this term any more uncomplimentary than that of conservative or stylistic, realistic, or even cubistic. Nevertheless one critic of an address recently delivered at the Frick Gallery in New York credits me with actually coining the term modernistic for the purposes of derogatory propaganda. I fail to concur in allotting to any group of extremists the sole use of the term modern. Any contemporary painter, sculptor, or architect is a modern. I further venture to intimate that conscious modernity consciously strained after may be properly termed modernistic. If this be derogation let it stand.

I have said elsewhere and at the risk of repeating may I say again that it is not only a truism but trite to maintain that in any field of creative impulse and endeavor we of the present must express today, must be of today. It is equally evident that what we create, to be true, must reflect contemporary thought, methods, and ideals.

In no field is this more definitely so, in no field should this contemporaneity be more generally accepted and clear-cut, than in the arts. And yet, strangely enough, there still seems to be a wide cleavage of opinion, a wide division of program, on the one hand tending toward the reactionary, on the other aiming toward the ultra-progressive. Is there not, however, a broad common basis on which the art of the past rests its qualities and upon which the art of the present and future may as well be reared? Are there not certain fundamental characteristics which go to make up an aesthetic—or call it what you will—upon which the arts may rely for those characteristics which stamp their works as art, violating or disregarding which a performance or creation ceases to be a work of art? I believe so.

A moment ago I found myself almost inadvertently using the term the arts. What are the arts? In what way does the meaning of this term differ from what we wish to express by the simple term art? Or more definitely yet, fine art? In the old days when a man was spoken of as an artist one meant that he practiced the production of beauty, not only in one or more, but perhaps many, of its varied phases. Specifically, as one looks back into the glorious past of fine art there immediately arise the ghosts of outstanding creators, seemingly dominated by that commanding figure, Michelangelo. Michelangelo, the architect, the painter, the sculptor, the craftsman. Was he an architect, was he a painter, or was he a sculptor? He was none of these exclusively, for he was an artist in the truest sense; perhaps an exceptional figure in his versatility, but nevertheless highly representative of his time. He embodied that mutual understanding among the arts, and among artists, which was a matter of course in those days. Were a man perhaps more talented in color, in clay, in marble, or in masonry, the work of his fellow artist was of supreme interest in that great period of high accomplishment. The result was customary and oft-recurring joint effort on the great works of the

time, a joy of mutual creation and mutual understanding, a mutually accepted common foundation to the structure of all art.

In any discussion it is well to start by a reasonable definition of the subject itself. We are here today, and most of us every day, to consider, to contemplate, and to study art. One definition of art is "the application of skill and taste to the production of beautiful things," and I like this definition, for it stresses a fundamental idea which seems to be wrapped up in the very concept of art, and that is beauty. Webster's dictionary, to which the English-speaking world at large more or less refers, gives as a definition, "the application of skill and taste to production according to aesthetic principles." In both of these definitions an element stands forth beyond mere dexterity or mechanical production, something which puts such creative production into a category where the aesthetic impulse must be recognized and aesthetic craving satisfied. There is not time nor am I prepared to go into an extended philosophic discussion of aesthetics, but I believe that in art, as such, the aesthetic principle must be not only taken for granted but acknowledged and demanded. If not, let taste lie dormant and let us declare anything art which has been produced by manual, or even mechanical process. Unfortunately this is just the kind of thing that many of the proponents of certain types of modernism which have been unduly dignified into schools, and which I term modernistic, are putting forth. But I say, and you say, too, I know: if we cannot have a simple credo of beauty, then let us stop right here and now.

And yet certain "advanced thinkers" are claiming that beauty has nothing to do with art. This seems to me to be due to an understandable impulse to get away from stylism and the superdevelopment of technique which clouded art perception so unfortunately during the nineteenth century. In a sense one cannot help but sympathize and even concur. The vigorous dissenter in his search for progress, seeks for something different, and—mistakenly, I believe—for the mere sake of difference. "Let us be different," he says, "that is forging ahead." Of course this argument is fallacious, but it has only too often been followed with disastrous results. For beauty has been a common factor of the art of the past. Renounce this factor and you will be different, it is true. But such is pure defeatism, understandable again because

it is perhaps a natural psychological result of the terrible cataclysm the world has gone through during the past twenty-five years. Indeed, members of this school of defeatism have occasionally gone so far as not only to deny beauty, but, a culminating fallacy, actually to institute an outright "cult of the ugly." Deny everything and affirm the opposite; deny technique, design, and beauty, and you have something new, it is true. But not art, for you are denying the very definition of art.

And then there is the mechanistic conception of art. This also seems to me to be equally fatuous defeatism. One may say, "man has developed machinery and mechanical methods until they have changed the very nature of life. Let us capitulate, therefore, and bow down and knuckle under and, even in our worship of this Moloch, imitate forms of machinery in all of our expression in art. Then shall we progress." Another fallacy, for by definition machinery is the very servant of man.

Both of these points of view seem abnormal. As such they cannot persist but will yield to truth. The trouble is that to follow either "ism" or school is easier. If drawing and design are no longer fundamental, and beauty not essential, "why study and work, why train yourself? It is not necessary." The falseness of such a philosophy, however, is proved not only by simple underlying principles of definition, but as well by the judgment of combined human experience. It is thus that I believe we must take a firm stand on the basic fundamental that art means beauty. It is upon such a foundation alone that we can proceed.

If the necessity for aesthetic quality in art is still questioned, as it may be in certain quarters, perhaps we may substitute another subjective pervading and governing element, emotionalism. Certainly beyond mere objectivity in a work must lie the subjective to make it art and not mere photographic recording. The subjective stirring which one feels before great art is surely closely related to emotion. So the stimulus to emotional reaction which gives that peculiar elevating feeling great art undeniably causes, may, after all, be correctly termed the aesthetic appeal. This may not be accurate psychological analysis and definition, but it is what we sense when art touches and convinces. The difficulty comes when an emotional appeal other than aesthetic is called upon. Here certain modern movements have erred. The appeal to

the morbid is hardly aesthetic. Is it art? On the answer depends the validity of the contention that certain works which suggest horror, obscenity, and even perversion, are art. And the fact that the line is hard to draw lends verisimilitude to such philosophy, warped as it may be.

We are living in a period which, struggle as some of us may, seems to be pointing toward collectivism; and artistic ideals, by this collectivism, are being subjected to a crushing down to lower levels. Perhaps this may in part account for the extremist swing away from beauty in much of our contemporary art. If so the final result is on the lap of the gods.

But, after all, the standards of the day, rigid or lax, are not the determining factor. The true art of the past is alive and perennial. The true art of today will live and endure, but only in recognizing and adhering to standards which slowly unfolding human experience has revealed and which only a continued, ordered and universal development can change. Again let us not forget that through it all has run the appeal to the aesthetic. Two decades are not going to eliminate the results of the experience of mankind.

In our appreciation and evaluation of contemporary art we can at least avoid certain pitfalls that beset us in the contemplation and criticism of the art of the past. A work of our own time stands or falls upon its inherent qualities. This should be true, of course, of any work of art. Unfortunately such is not the case. Only too often archaeological significance obscures true estimate. Nor in the work of a living artist can the element of rarity enter to cloud cool judgment in arriving at a true estimate from both the objective evidence and the subjective reaction as conveyed by the work of art itself. So I venture to believe that the removal of the "date-and-name" complex in art evaluation is one of the stimulating and refreshing excellencies of the modern art movement. Archaeology is inspiring in its factual results. It is vicious as an art test.

More inexplicable still has been the more or less recent tendency in the world of collecting and criticism to establish and to follow modes or fashions. The vogue for the Barbizon School, reaching particular intensity in the "gay nineties," set fictitious standards and established fictitious values, we now know only too

well. We look with complacency upon collectors who filled their galleries with the landscapes of Daubigny and Corot and lauded beyond all proportion for a period Monticelli and Millet. The subsequent fashion for the English School of the eighteenth century resulted in establishing the works of these painters far above their real or inherent merit. And recently the vogue for the early Italian not only has brought to light numbers of interesting panels of hitherto unrecognized merit, but has also pushed forward second- and third-rate paintings and artists far beyond their place as determined by sheer relative excellence.

And now has come the expertising school of criticism. Recent progress in expertising has been extraordinary, and let me say immediately that it has been of phenomenal service in establishing authenticity. But as a basis for art criticism and the establishing of standards it seems almost elementary to recall that it goes beyond its function. Here again let me say that we are not to be obscured by antiquarianism or preciousness in arriving at our evaluation of a contemporary work.

On the other hand newer pitfalls, characteristic of the newer epoch, await us. Perhaps the outstanding element of our present-day commercial epoch is advertisement. Industries are made or broken by good or bad publicity. Much of the struggle of the recent terrible World War was carried on in the offices of the respective agencies for propaganda. Great manufacturers consult great advertising concerns. A magnate puts down, almost without blinking, a million dollars to float this or that breakfast food or cigarette, well knowing that the return is sure.

Why then, as following definite modern trends, should not modern art—after all a new movement that has to be “sold” to the public—take modern if extraneous means to offset extraneous stimuli such as I have mentioned, which place undue value and esteem upon the works of the past? This is being done, and in a most vigorous and universal manner, unfortunately obscuring real quality, just as surely as do the archaeological, antiquarian, and expertising evaluations in the case of the art of the past. I believe that in no other way could the school of conscious naiveté have foisted its works upon a gullible public. How else could reasonable human beings actually take seriously and accept the paradox of sophisticated primitivism as a governing motive of

the development of modern art? Unless strongly impelled away from elementary understanding by artificial means, how could we take as a new gospel the deliberate affecting by the twentieth century mind of the point of view and technical ability in art which were the spontaneous and direct impulses and methods of the dawning of human civilization? Whether we like it or not we are of our own time. The imitation of the primitive is an imitation. As such it is as false as the most archaeological stylism in design, which after all is but the same copying from a period of the past. And if the evidentness of mid-nineteenth century painting be an insult to the intelligence, so is neo-primitivism.

We are therefore living in an era of propaganda, the rational result of imposed modern methods of publicity. But is it not true that any phase or school of art which depends upon propaganda to launch it, or to foster or to maintain its success, is weak and evanescent? Art rests on foundations more solid than those of publicity.

A lesser definition of art is dexterity. It is a good one. The first technical quality that an artist must acquire is dexterity, dexterity not only of the hand but of the eye; more particularly, perhaps, of the eye. I have always believed that drawing and representation were primarily seeing, and by this I do not mean seeing as through the lens of the camera, but seeing through the lens of the intellect. Thus, underlying the preparation and production of art throughout the world's history, there has been a lot of hard work. I know of no period, or school, or individual artist, who has achieved front rank without prolonged training, and sometimes I think the greater the figure in the history of art, the more profound and complete was his preparation. An artist must first, fundamentally, and finally have mastery of vision and its artistic corollary, ability to depict. Dexterity in drawing is but a means to expression. Not only must we see, but our art is to make others see. There is no road which brings artists to such dexterity but long, hard work. We take such continued discipline as a matter of course in the case of the musician. Just so in the case of the artist in other fields.

Naturally the creative impulse carries the artist further into the realm of composition or design. Here the arts have much in common which I venture to suggest is really the very essence of

art. Certain underlying principles govern design no matter what is being produced—whether a great mural, a great statue, a fine building, or a handsome packing box. Through all the arts of design there run certain basic principles which constitute the appeal to our æsthetic sense. Unity, symmetry or balance, proportion, rhythm, pattern, and scale govern good composition or good design. Here again an understanding and recognition of these fundamentals means a command of the craft, and final dexterity. If today reasonable specialization seems finally necessary, specialization should not begin until a certain command of the basic processes is available, and this is what is meant by fundamentals. Then the artist may branch out into the fields of specialization as inclination and fitness lead him.

And so after all one seems to find a certain separation between conception and practice in the various arts. This has often troubled me throughout my experience as an educator in this field. Such distinctions are, unfortunately, almost universal today. While these distinctions may perhaps seem trivial, they have been invidious in suggestion and result. What should come with the new renaissance, already appearing over the horizon, is a complete fading of the distinction among the various arts, a distinction, by the way, which the English-speaking peoples have carried to perhaps greater extreme than the other nations.

Intolerance and *parti pris* may also act temporarily as retarding elements in the recognition of truth. Those in sympathy with the magnificent humanistic development and reassertion of individualism ushered in by the Renaissance may wonder at a certain living artist and critic's referring to the great period discussed by Professor Mather, in the field of architecture particularly, as "Decadence" and "Neopaganism." But why should we wonder? Was it not in turn Renaissance Italy which stigmatized the earlier mediaeval period with the opprobrious term of Gothic?

And now in spite of divergence of opinion and approach, I am optimist enough to believe that again we are faced with a renaissance—a renaissance moving forward and approaching at a tremendous rate and with tremendous force, and gaining impetus and momentum in a race and struggle to keep up with the times, with the acknowledged rapid, modern, social, material, and mechanical development. It would therefore seem that there must

be even wider opportunities than were offered to the artists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These opportunities may be present and within reach, but until contemporary artists can see them, seize upon them, and realize them, they might as well not exist.

Many of us here tonight are educators and museum curators. A duty devolves upon our educational centers and galleries. I have already ventured to suggest to my colleagues that they must not only train artists in mutual understanding, but also that there is a duty to train the public. A pretty large order, you say. Yes, and no. But we can go a great way toward building up a true appreciation of art, on the one hand; and out of this, on the other, may develop a smaller group of dilettanti, connoisseurs, purchasers and patrons. In our schools today we fondly believe we are getting picked human material and are preparing men and women to go out and, we hope, be leaders among their fellows. Certainly the fact of specialized education should, other things being equal, produce a specialized sort of brain. But many schools and colleges in their courses in art history make the mistake of teaching only the art of the past. The practitioners of the present, I think, should all justly resent such restriction of study. To me it defeats the very aim of art instruction, which is, in essence, to train people to see. If, after training our public, they have one kind of eyes for what they see about them, and another for objects from the past, what is to become of modern art? Not only, therefore, should we always stress in due degree the art of the present, particularly in all curricula designed even for the layman, but we must go further and try continually to bring out the interdependence of the arts, past and present, upon each other, as well, of course, as the value of tradition as it bears on the art of the present, in an endeavor to stimulate and foster a real knowledge not only of what art was, but what it is and should be.

The history of art has shown us that there is a nice balance to be maintained between the objective and subjective. Painting and perhaps music give the widest latitude of expression. We can range from the objectiveness of Bouguereau to the subjectiveness of Picasso. Such extremes may be interesting to study in realizing that the one may depict too much, the other too little. Per-

haps reaction against this is the reason why primitive art in its subjectivity appeals. But the sophisticated techniques in their objectivity also intrigue us. Again let us be mutually tolerant.

The intensified move toward the subjective in some of the phases of modern art is but another natural reaction against the decline and practical elimination of this quality during the imitation of the perfections of photography so marked in nineteenth century painting. As such, a return to the higher intellectual qualities characteristic of the great art periods deserves our enthusiastic acclaim and support. And if in the move away from literal representation our artists go beyond the reasonable possibilities of conveying ideas, their works should be welcomed and viewed not only with tolerance, but with every attempt at understanding. The pendulum is bound to swing from extreme to extreme. Sooner or later it will quiet down to a reasonable vibration. Then shall we have another great period of art expression. It is on its way.

And finally, before turning to the illustrations I am about to show, may I offer a further plea for the value as well of the objective point of view in the arts. The maintenance of reasonable objectivity as we approach, absorb, and analyze the works of our contemporaries in their different phases, will help us, I am confident, to steer a clear course through the various present-day "isms" as they crop up one by one, day by day, about us. Indefinite, abstruse, esoteric explanations are offered only too frequently to explain individual idiosyncrasies or phases of work which otherwise leave us puzzled. Art, so-called, which needs such interpretation is, to me, frankly under suspicion. Throughout the history of art those works which have stood forth pre-eminent have not needed such interpretation. Six thousand years—yes more, because perhaps above all we must take in prehistoric art—have given us works which, by their direct objective, as well as subjective appeal, stand out pre-eminent. Must we now change from what human experience since the dawn of mankind has built up slowly, accurately, and surely as a fundamental aesthetic, and, discarding the definite results of such an evolution, start a new basis of quality and appreciation in art? I, for one, do not believe so.

And at the risk of repeating, may I urge again that as we

move forward there is one great principle which we must not forget. A work is not necessarily good just because it is new. As in the past there was good, bad, and indifferent work, so today and tomorrow there will be not only fine and beautiful work, but insignificant and bad work. And above all, the fundamentals hold good in judging the work of today and tomorrow as well as of the past.

So I do believe that the art of the present and the art of the future must continue to appeal both objectively and subjectively to that which has developed in us with our *mores*, our civilization, and our very physical being—a something, which for want of a better name I have ventured to term the aesthetic, as it has evolved and matured through the history of human experience.

I think it will be evident from the illustrations we have glimpsed, particularly those of painting and sculpture, that there is a tendency to return to the primitive. May I repeat that to do this in any way except by returning to fundamental general principles seems to me an affectation? The charm of primitive art is its spontaneity as a true expression of primitive mentality. To affect primitivism seems to me far worse than the affecting of technique or stylism.

I have also tried to indicate the necessity for us, as members perhaps of the great public, to set aside a more or less general inferiority complex with regard to understanding some of the newer phases of so-called art. If progress is to be made in the development of style or school, it must be made for the benefit of the public at large, not for the few, and above all not for the individual artist himself. If only he, or an initiated coterie, can understand and appreciate, then performance in the name of art with such a limited appeal fails to meet the test of the primary definition of art and thus fails to perform its primary function.

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